

#5

JASON PELL • EMILIO UTRERA • JOHN MACLEOD

**BAD
BUG**
MIDNIGHT
MATURE 17+

FLICKERING LIGHTS





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WRITTEN BY JASON PELL

ART BY EMILIO UTREDA

EDITED BY JOHN MACLEOD

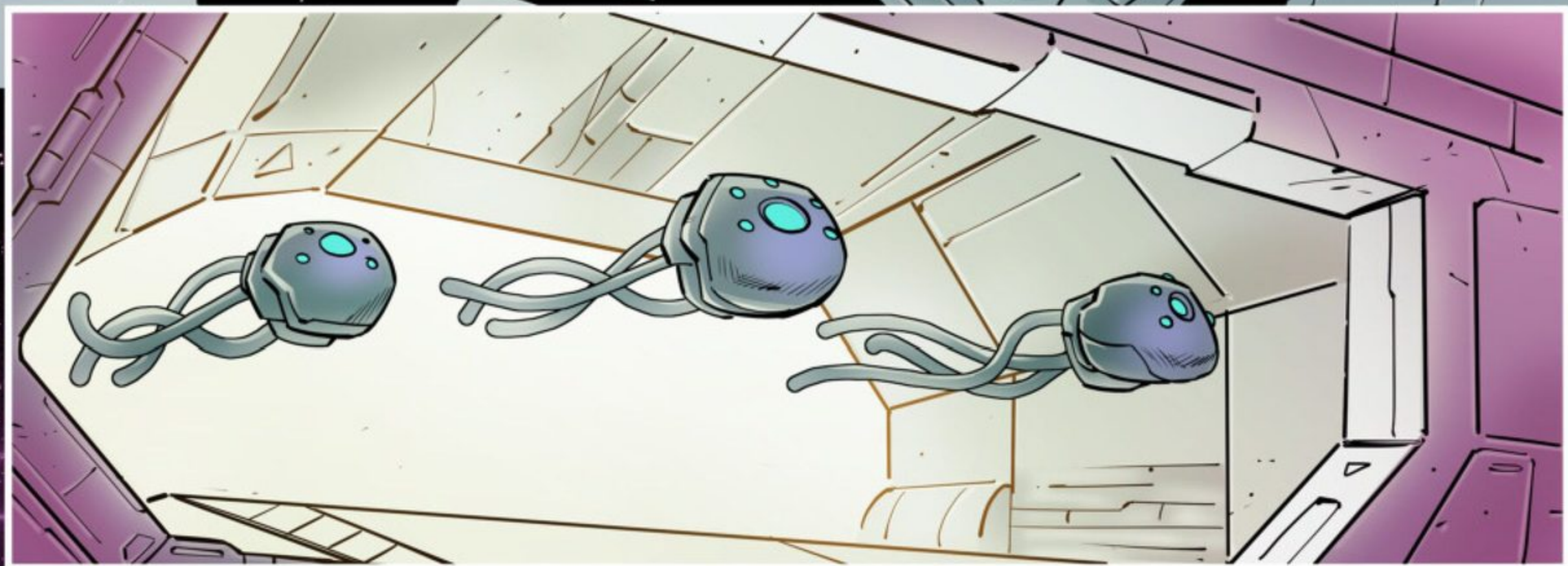
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PRODUCED BY MIKE TENER

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THE NOTUS. THE
THIRD SHIP.

THE
DRONES
ARE PRIMED,
CAPTAIN.



"READINGS ARE
CONSISTENT."

"THERE'S A **CONSIDERABLE**
AMOUNT OF ENERGY EMANATING
FROM THE TEAR, BUT WELL
WITHIN SAFE PARAMETERS."

FEED FROM
DRONES IS STRONG,
AND WE AREN'T SEEING
ANY **FOREIGN SIGNALS**
TRYING TO PIGGY-
BACK.



YOU AREN'T A LITTLE NERVOUS THAT THE INVADERS ARE FOOLING US AGAIN? TO FOLLOW THE SIGNALS BACK LIKE BEFORE?

THEY THOUGHT THE **ENERGY CAGES** WORKED AND NOW, THEY AREN'T SO SURE.

IT'S ALL A RISK, BUT WE NEED TO KNOW MORE.



AND WITH THESE NEW MODELS, WE CAN STUDY THE **TEAR** LIKE WE NEVER COULD HAVE BEFORE.

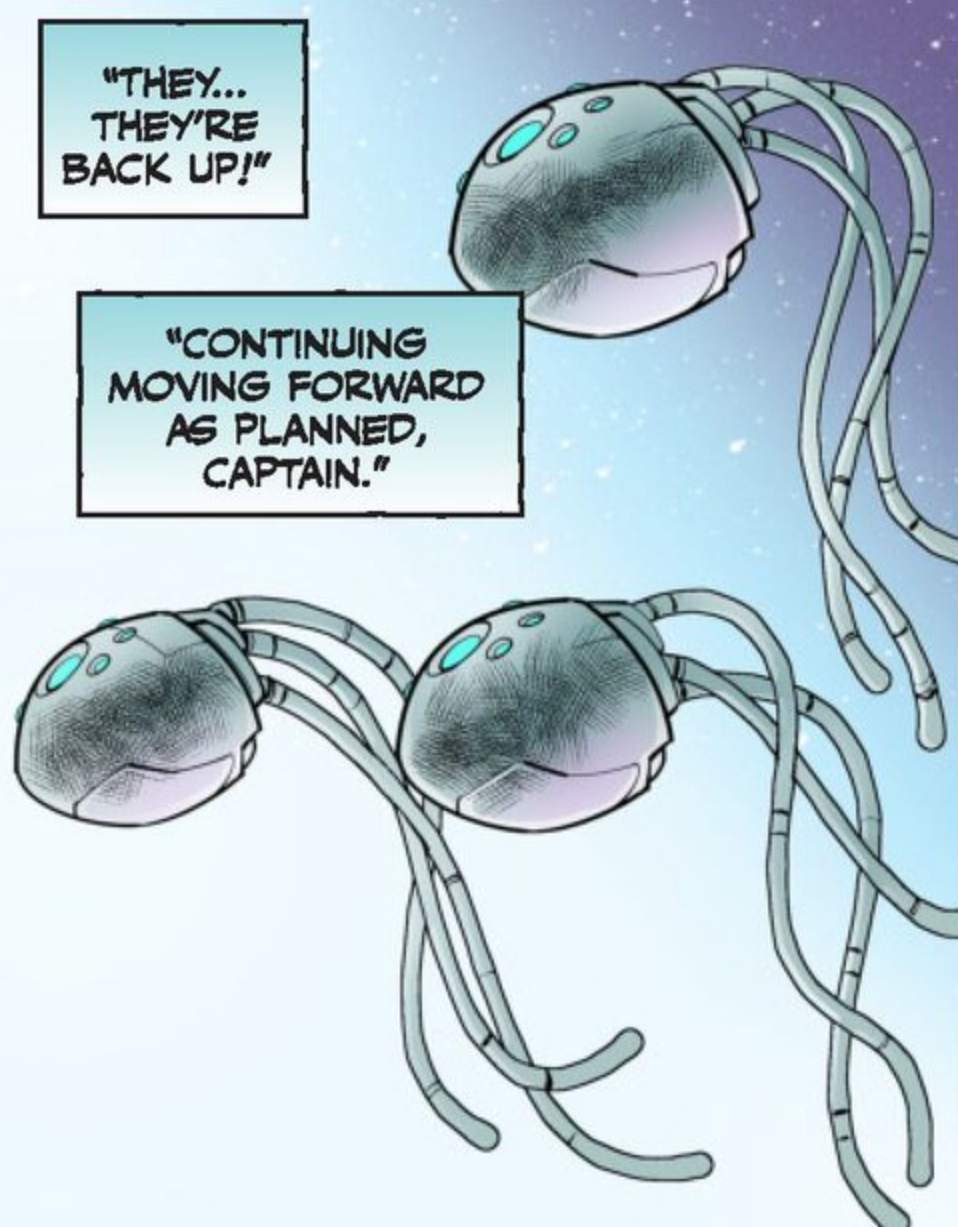
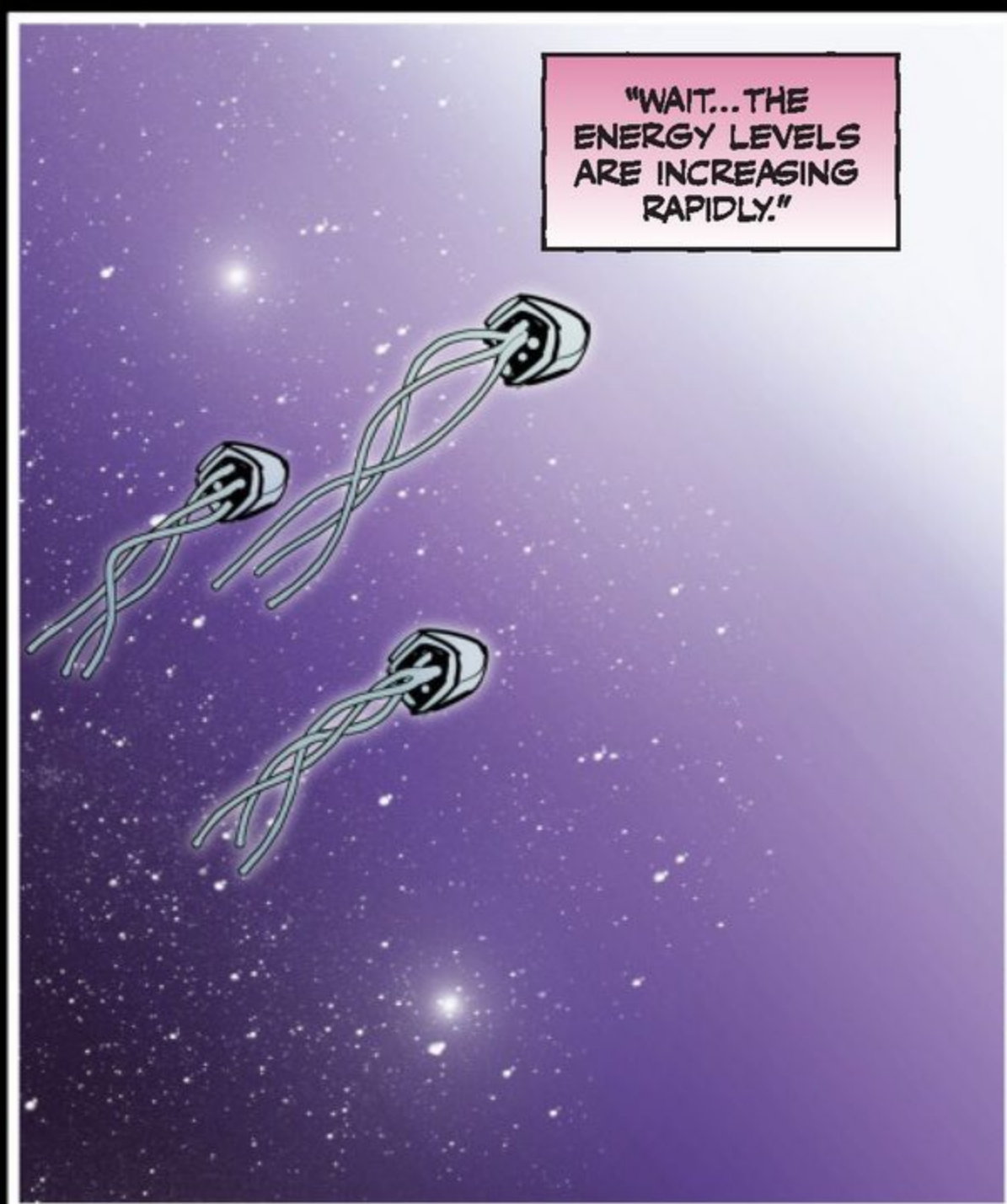
LET THE OTHER SHIPS TRY, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE US, THAT SAVES THE UNIVERSE.



FOCUS. THE DRONES ARE ALMOST THERE.

YES, CAPTAIN.







I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH SENDING THEM FORWARD JUST YET.



IT COULD HAVE BEEN JUST AN AUTOMATED REBOOT AS THE DRONES ADJUSTED TO THE ENERGY LEVELS.

OR EVEN SOMETHING THAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE CONNECTION ON OUR END.



COULD HAVE BEEN LOTS OF THINGS. BUT WE CAN'T RISK THAT HAPPENING ONCE THEY'VE CROSSED OVER.

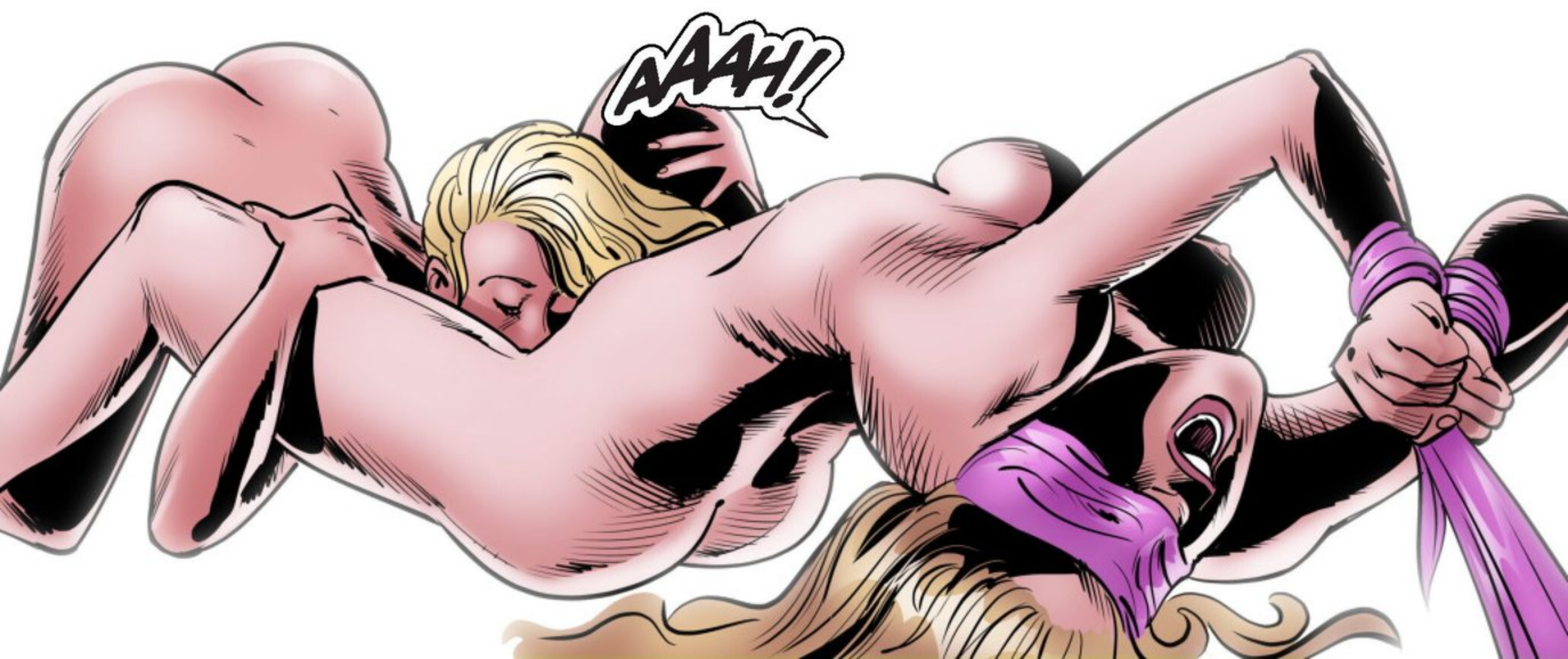
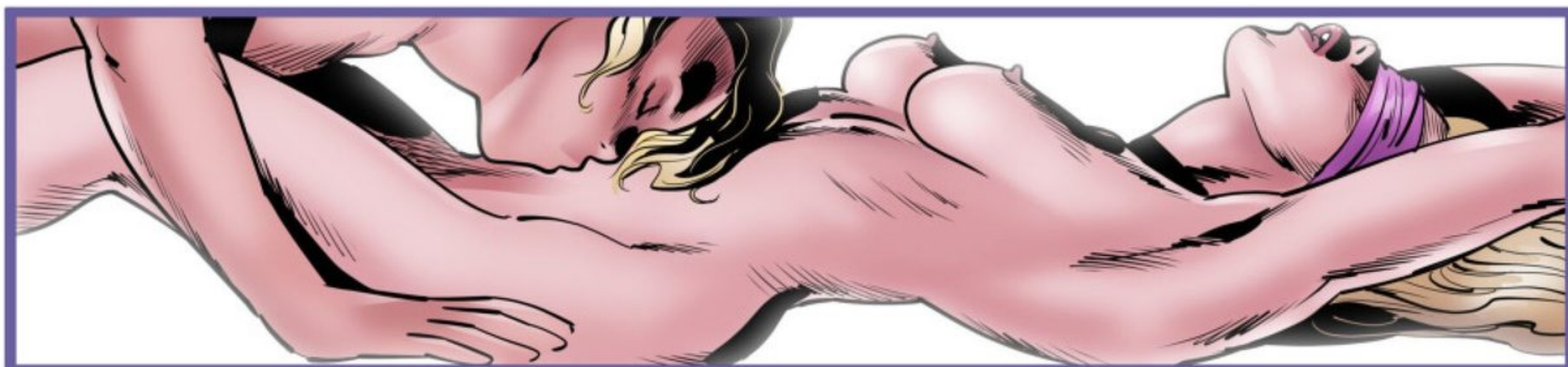
DIRECT THEM TO THE HANGAR BAY, AND STAY SEATED UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS.



WE MIGHT GET ANOTHER SHOT AT THIS, BUT FOR NOW, I'LL LET THE OTHER SHIPS KNOW IT'S *THEIR* TURN.

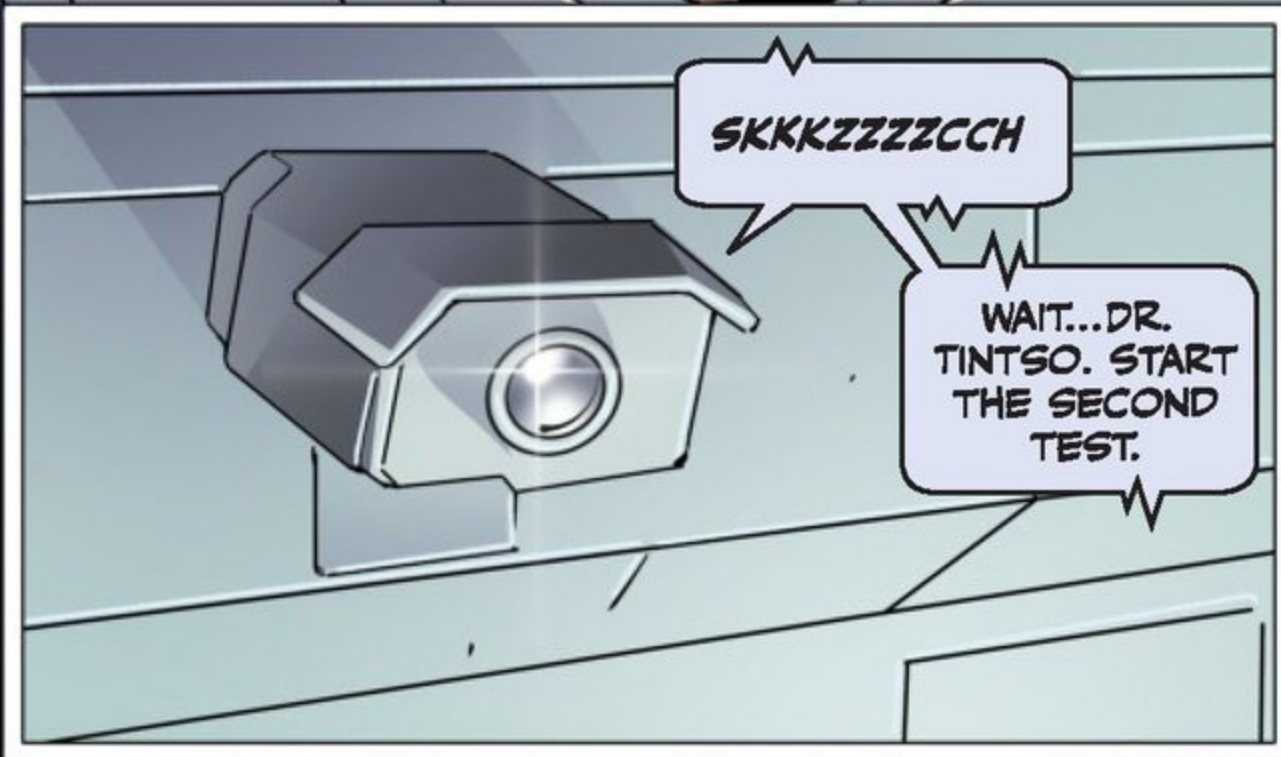
I'M SORRY.







ALL DONE
SAMUEL. THE DOCTOR
WANTED ONE LAST
TEST TO ...



SKKKZZZZCCH

WAIT...DR.
TINTSO. START
THE SECOND
TEST.



DOCTOR, I
THOUGHT WE
DECIDED NOT TO
DO THIS.

PLEASE DIM
THE LIGHTS AGAIN,
DR. TINTSO.



DOCTOR,
I'M NOT
SURE---

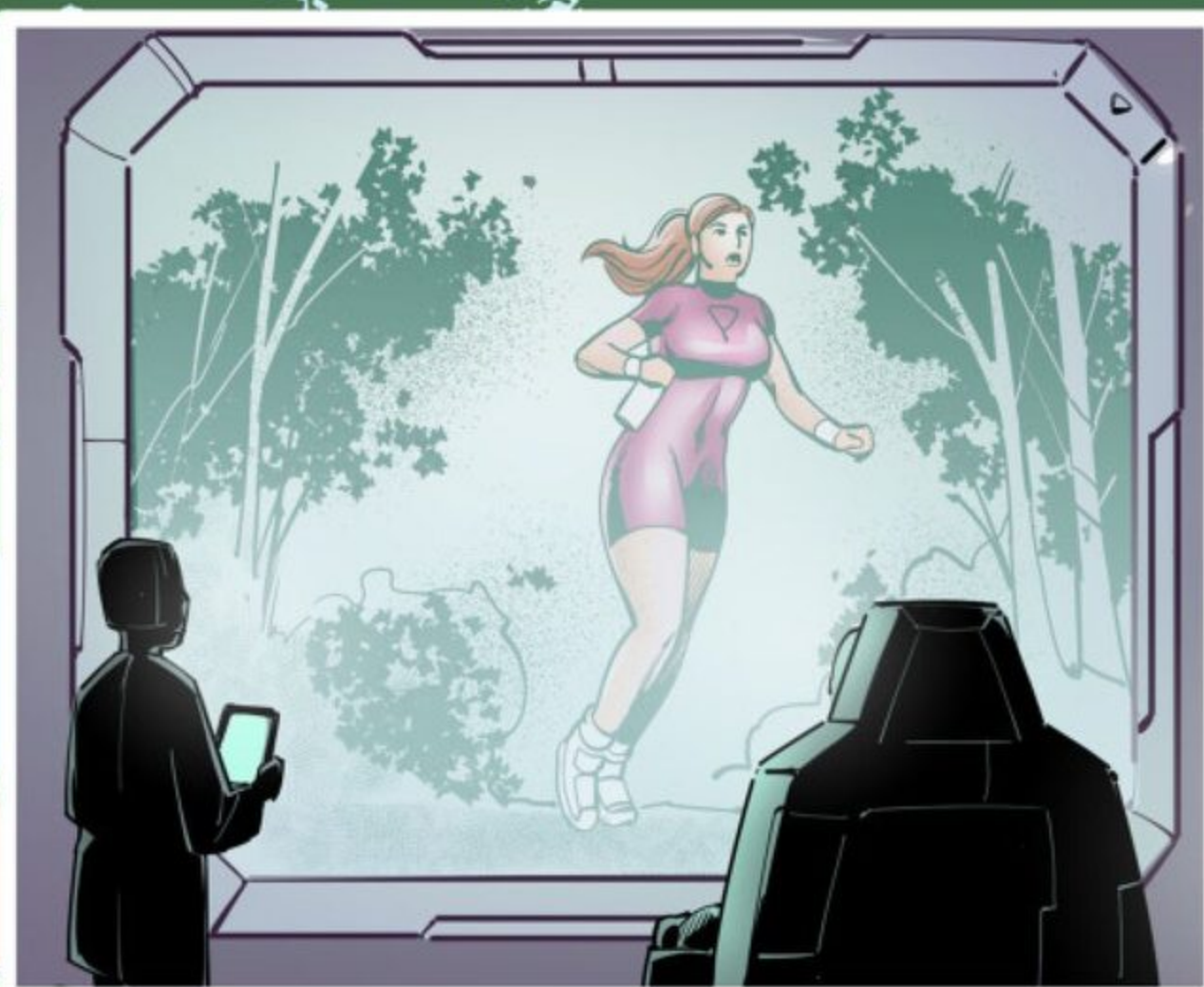
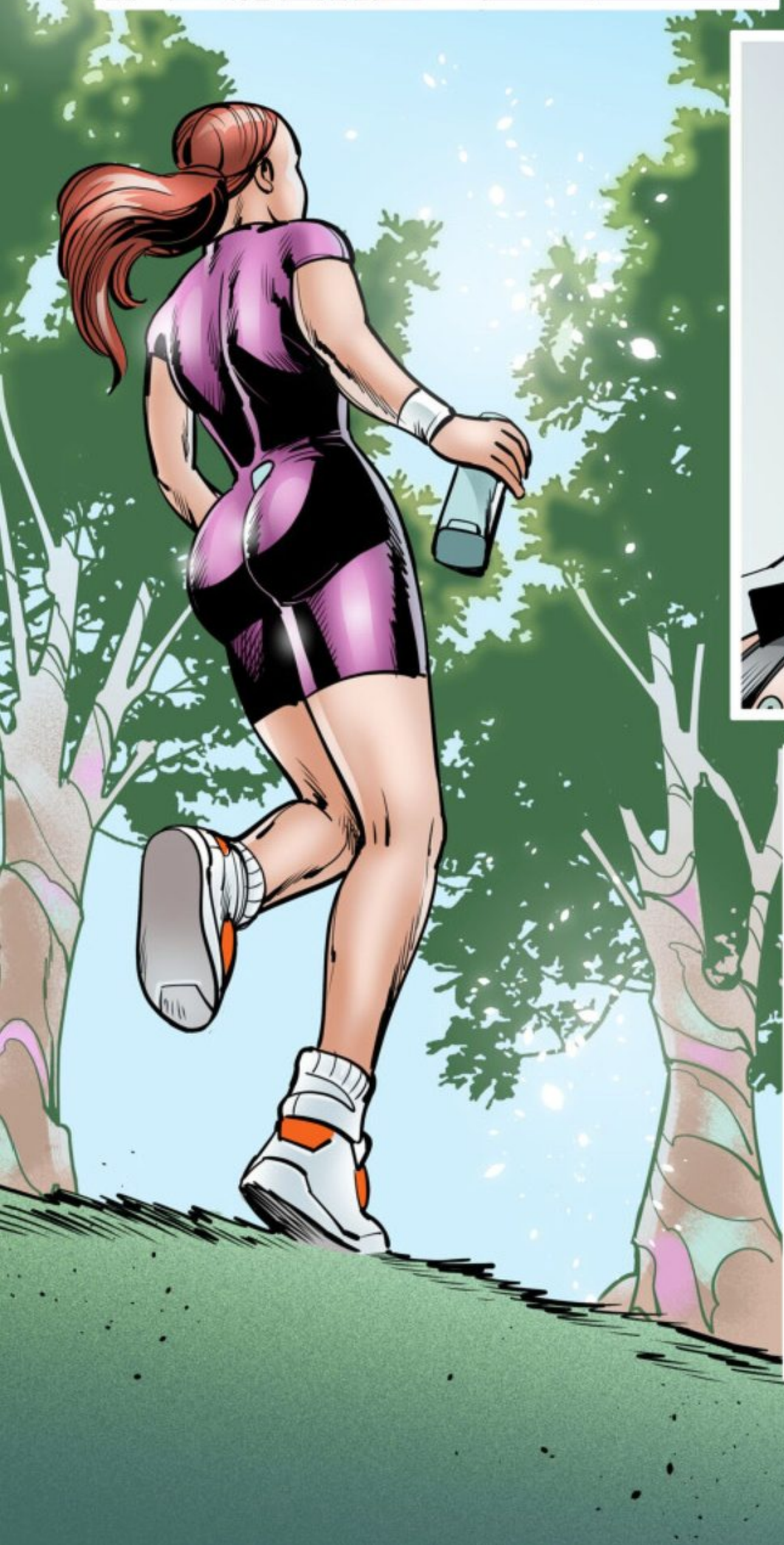
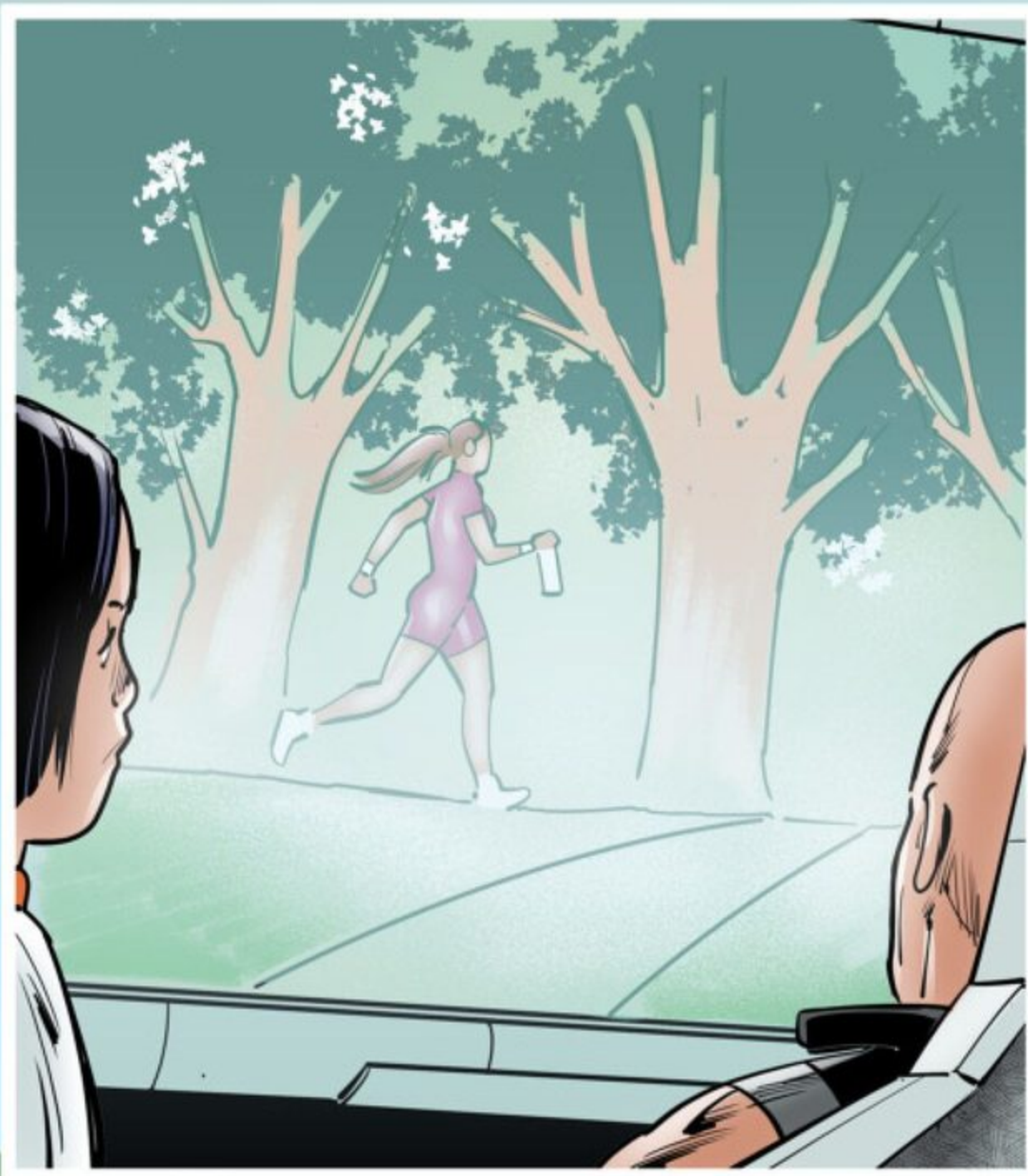
THE **NORTUS**
HAS FAILED. SAMUEL'S
ATTEMPT IS BEING
CALLED FOR. NOW, DIM
THE LIGHTS.

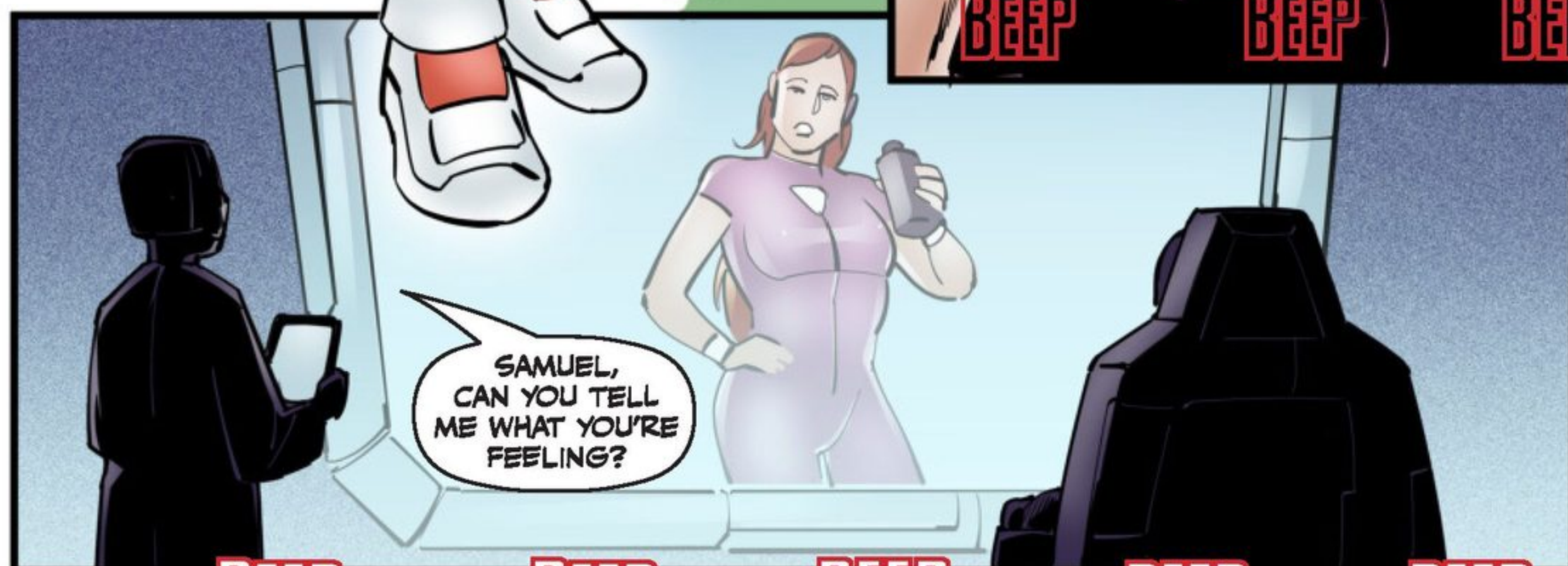
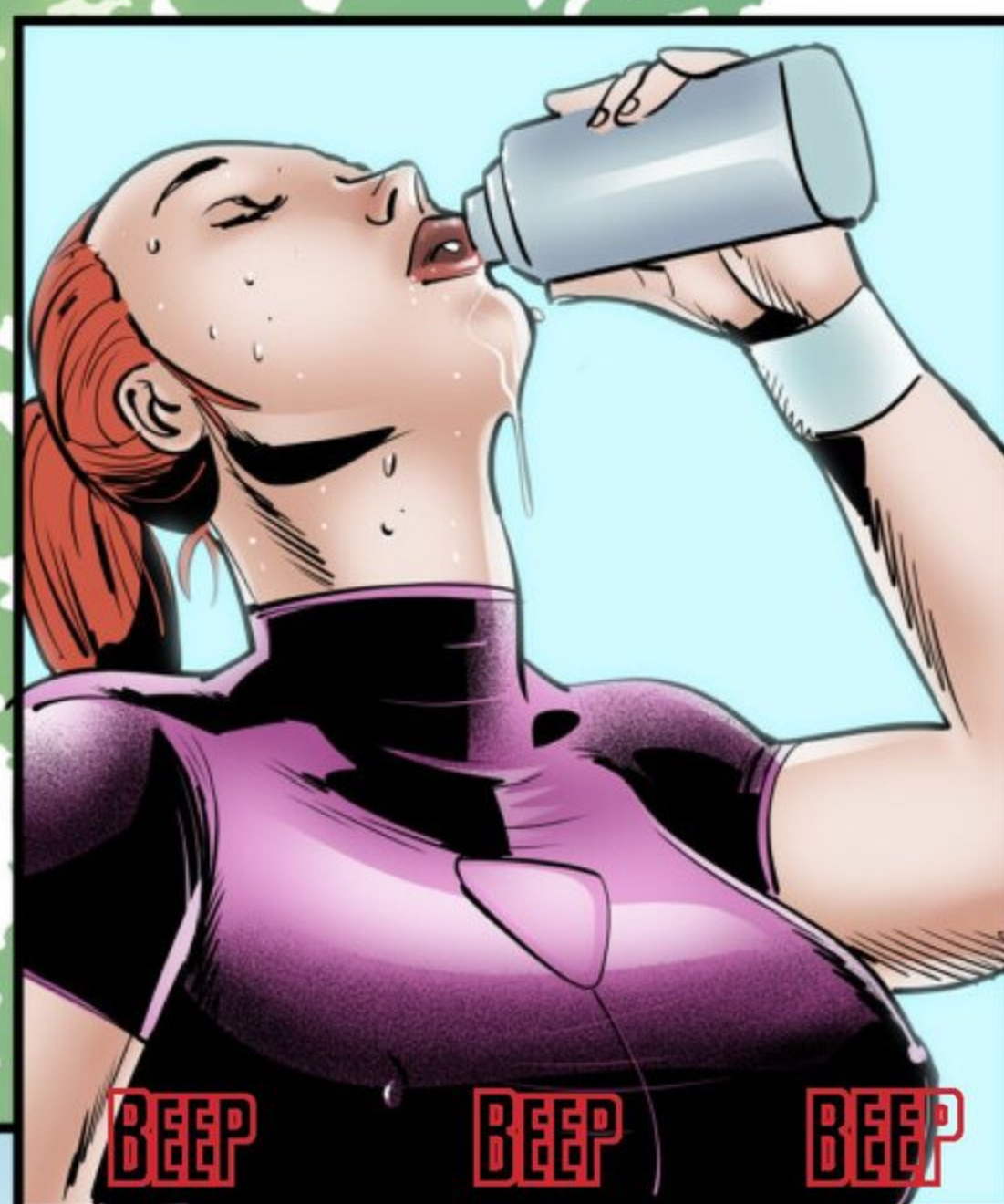
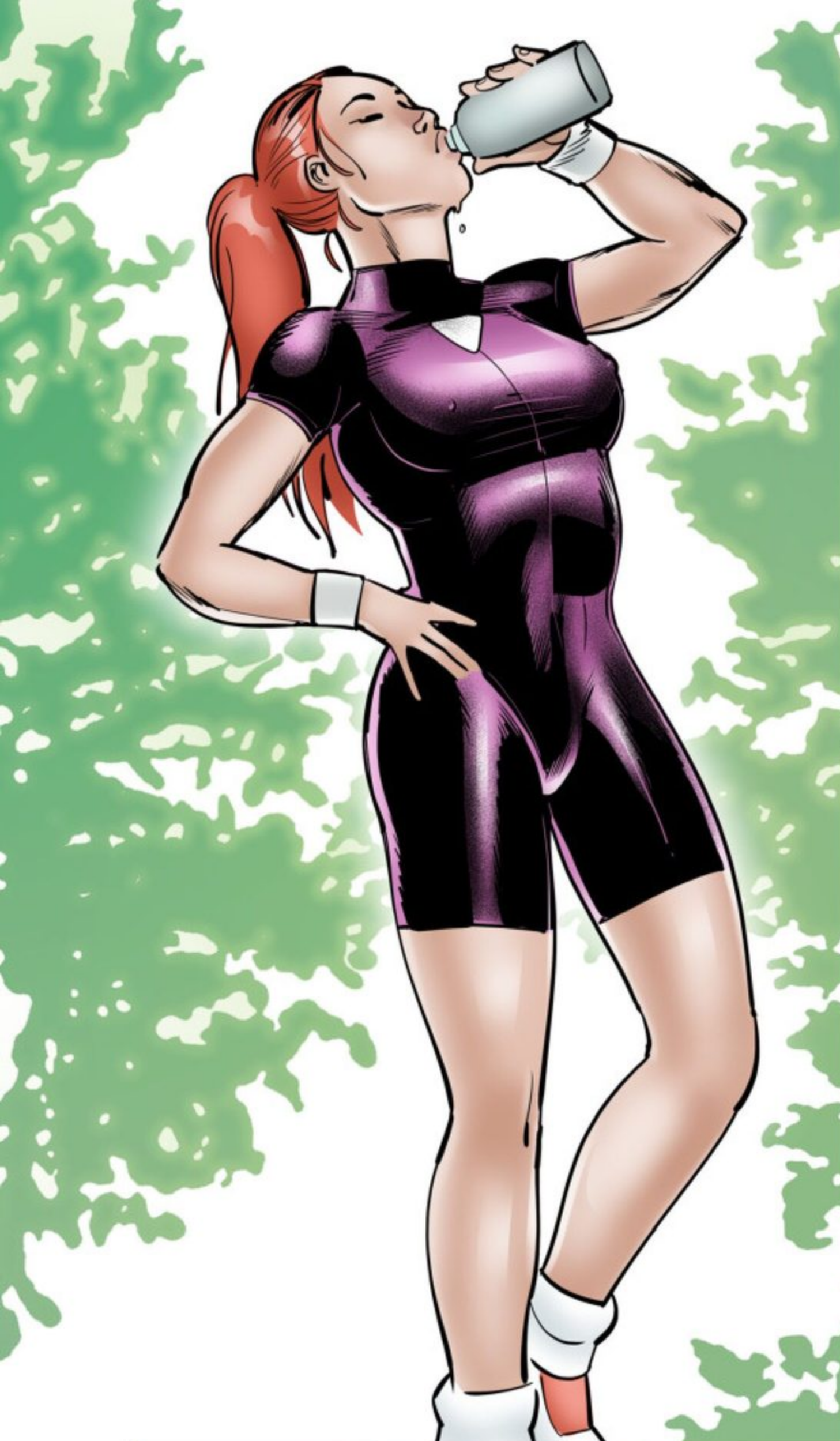


I WANT YOU
TO LOOK AT ONE
LAST THING FOR
ME, SAMUEL.

WILL
YOU DO
THAT?

...YES.





THE BOREAS.

YOU'VE
CONFIRMED THIS,
CAPTAIN RHODES?

YES. THE
NOTUS'S DRONES
HAVE *FALTERED*.

THEN THIS
IS OUR TIME.
XN-LC IS
WORKING!

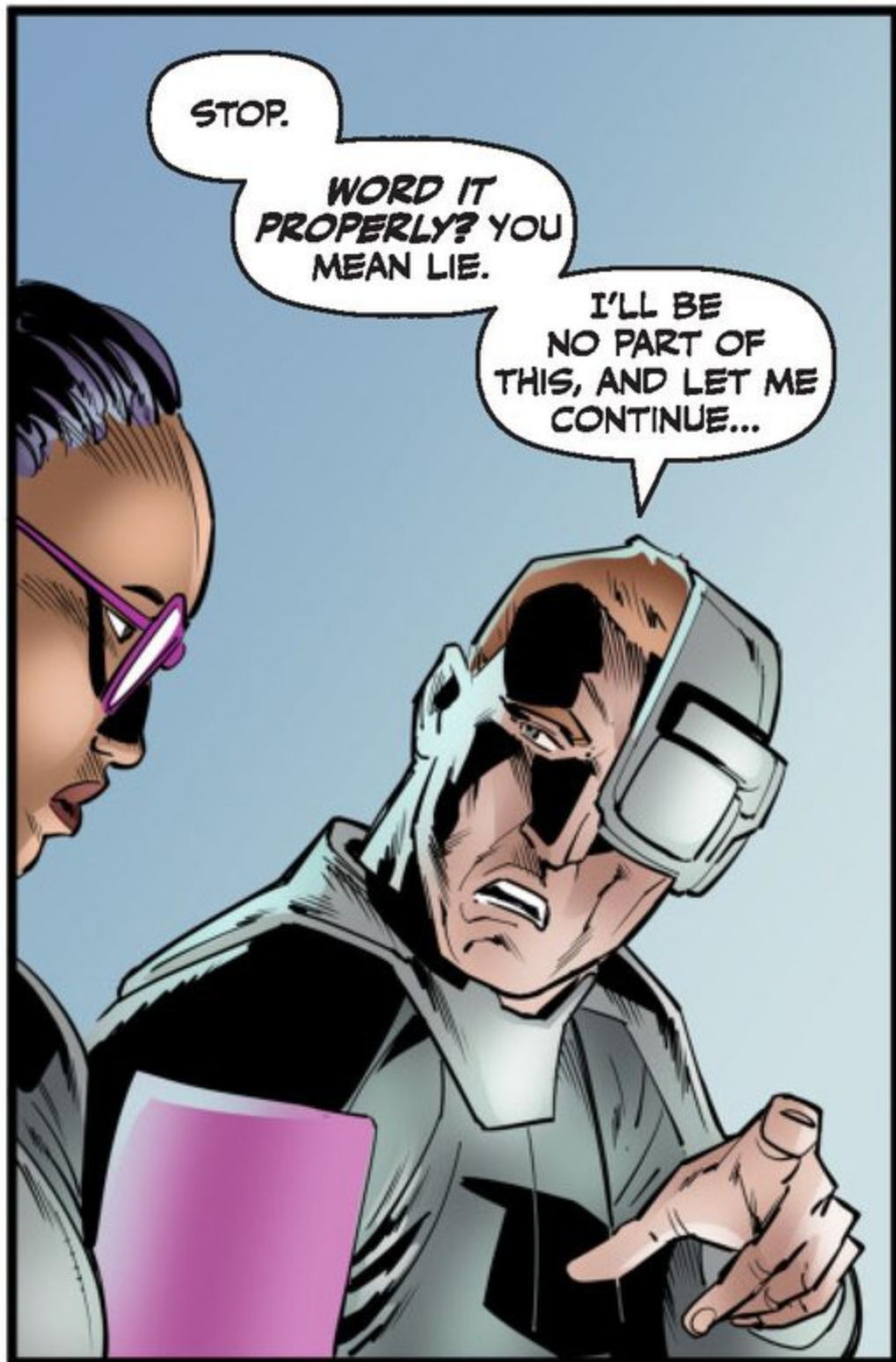
BUT ITS
EFFECTS ARE
TEMPORARY.

HOW MANY ADVANCEMENTS
WORK THE FIRST TIME? WE'LL
SEND VOLUNTEERS...AND IF THE
LIGHTS SHOW UP, WE CAN SEE IN
REAL TIME HOW LONG IT WILL
KEEP THEM SAFE FROM
THEIR INFLUENCE.

AND WITH THE
ERRATIC BEHAVIOR WE'VE
SEEN, THE LIGHTS COULD
POTENTIALLY LOSE INTEREST
AND LEAVE THEM ALONE
AND ALIVE!

VOLUNTEERS?
YOU KNOW SOME,
I ASSUME?

NO. BUT IF WE
PUT THE CALL OUT ON
THE BOREAS, AND *WORD*
IT PROPERLY...





SAMUEL.

SAMUEL,
WAIT.



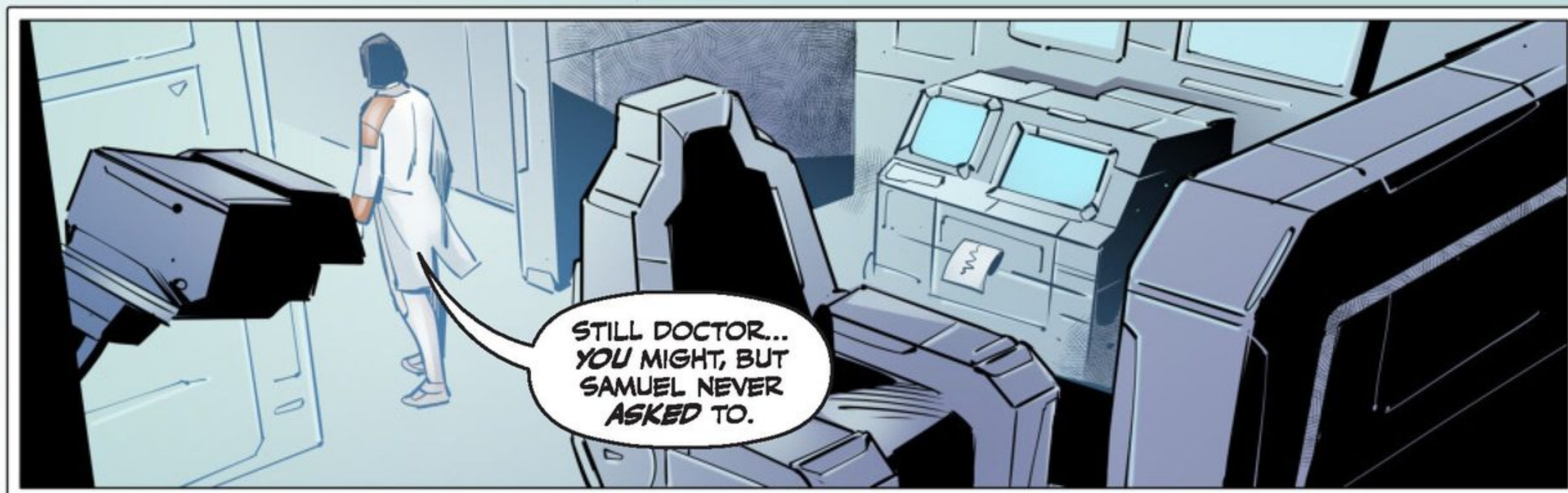
LET
HIM GO.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY
TIME FOR MORE TESTING.



WE WENT TOO
FAR, DOCTOR FORTNER.
THAT WAS CRUEL

WHEN THIS
MUCH IS AT STAKE,
I'LL GLADLY CARRY EVERY
JUDGMENT AND DAMNATION
PUT UPON ME.



STILL DOCTOR...
YOU MIGHT, BUT
SAMUEL NEVER
ASKED TO.

THE NOTUS.

ANY INFORMATION ON THE DRONES THAT RETURNED?

WHADDYA MEAN, CAPTAIN?

THEY AREN'T BACK YET.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN NOT BACK? WHERE ARE THEY IF NOT HERE?

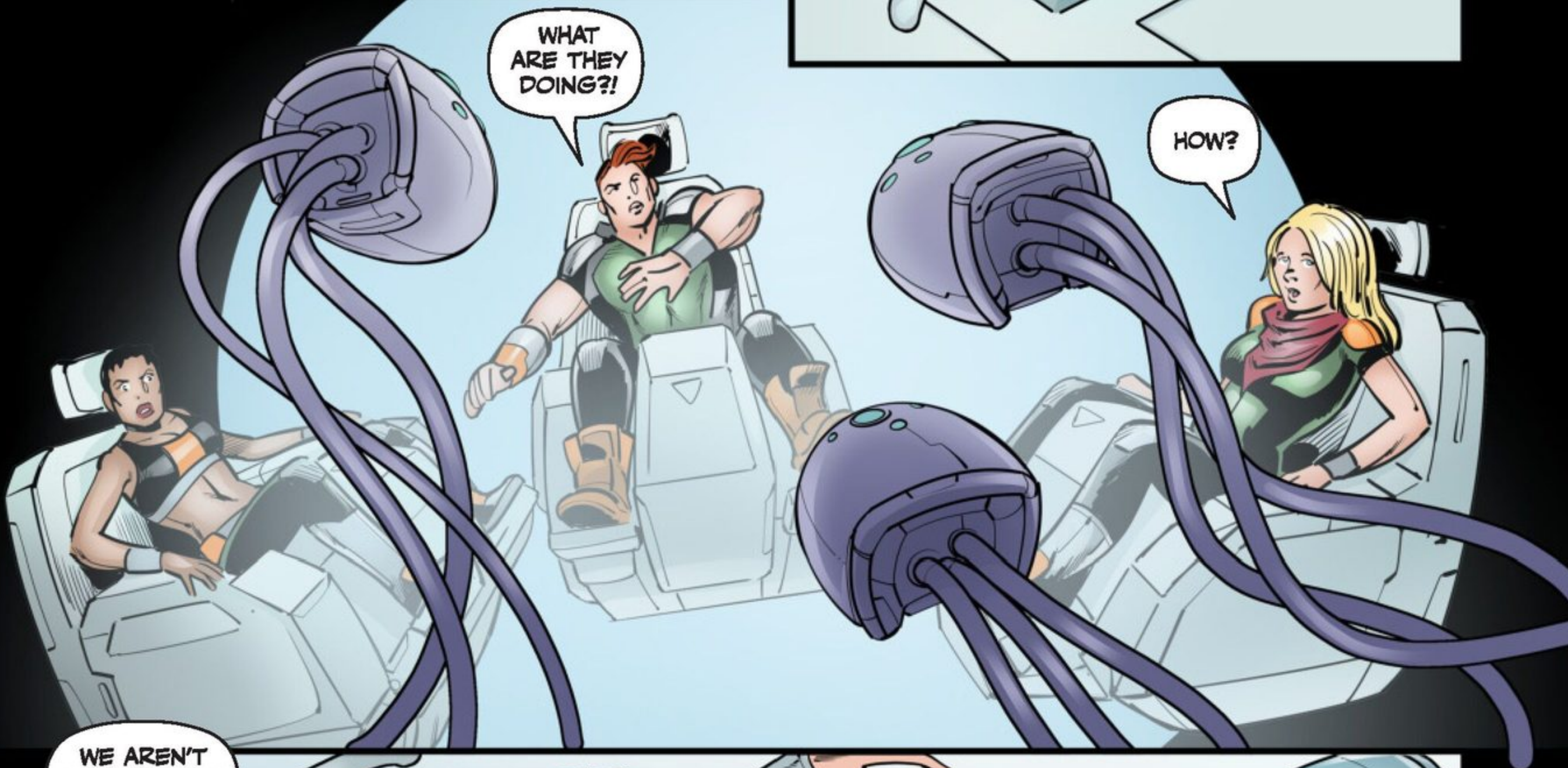
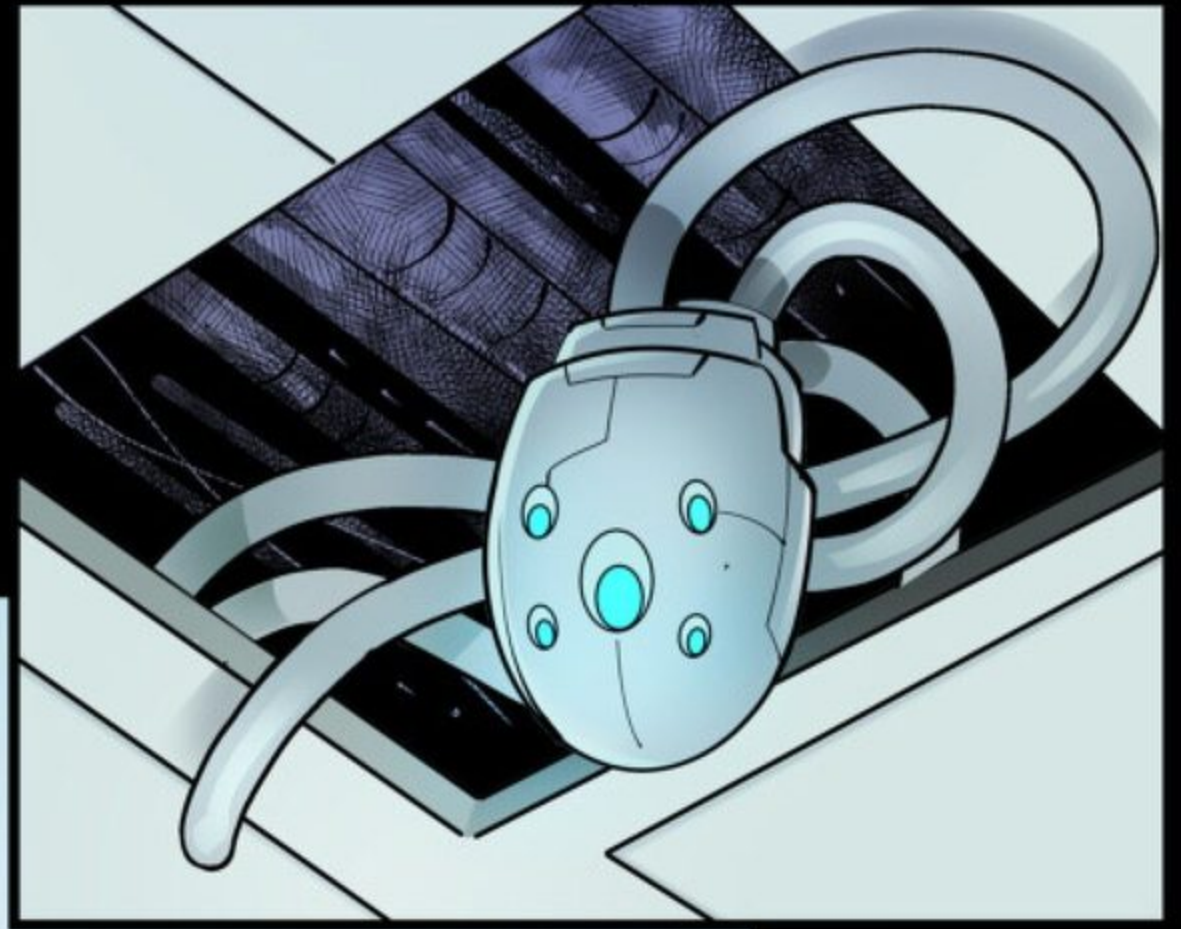
DOUBLE CHECK. NOW.

WELL IT SAYS... WAIT. YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT'S WEIRD, THOUGH.

WHY WOULD THEY BE IN THE MAINTENANCE TUNNELS?

CAPTAIN IS TAKING A LONG TIME. WONDER WHAT...

SSHH... YOU HEAR THAT?



WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!

HOW?

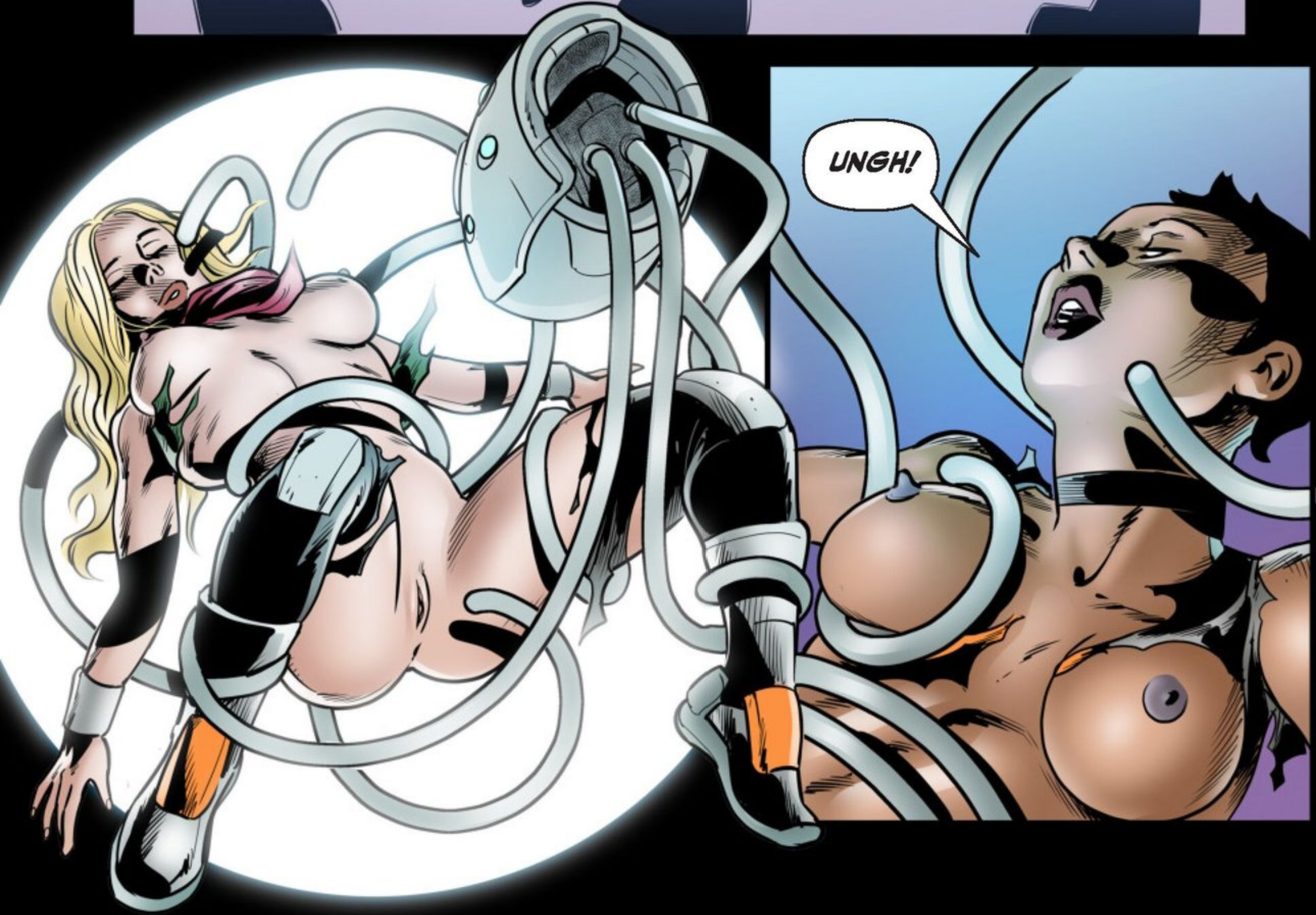
WE AREN'T CONTROLLING THEM!

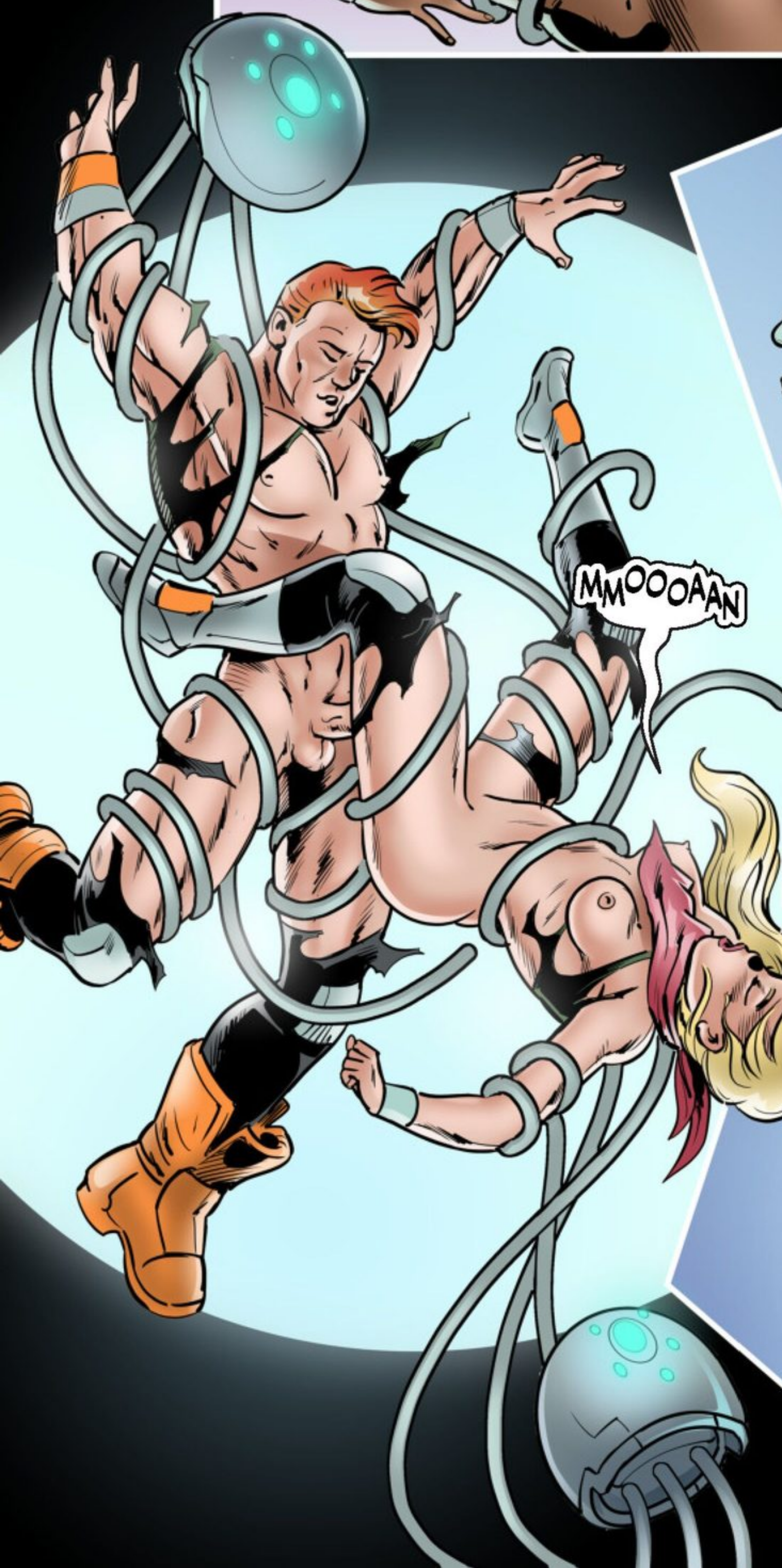
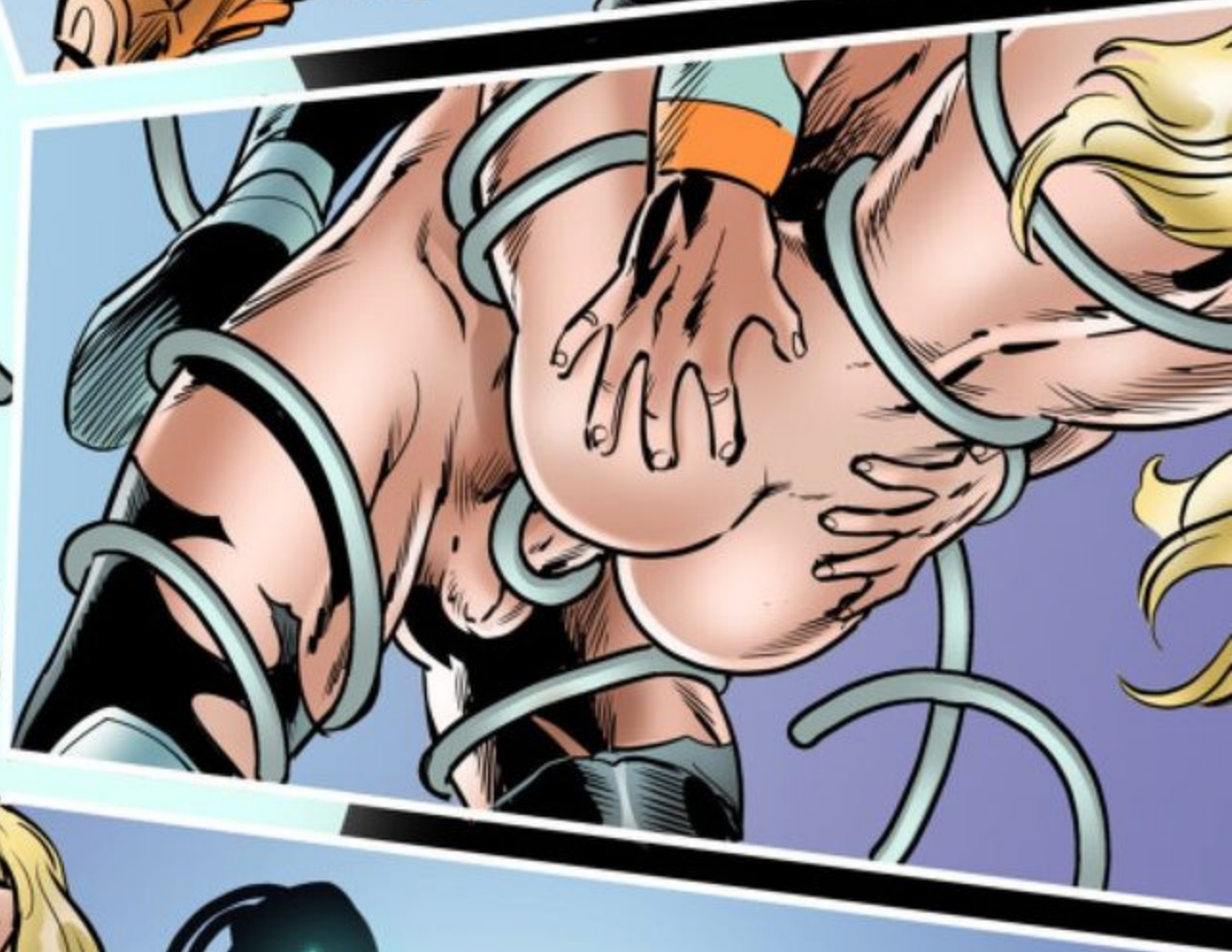
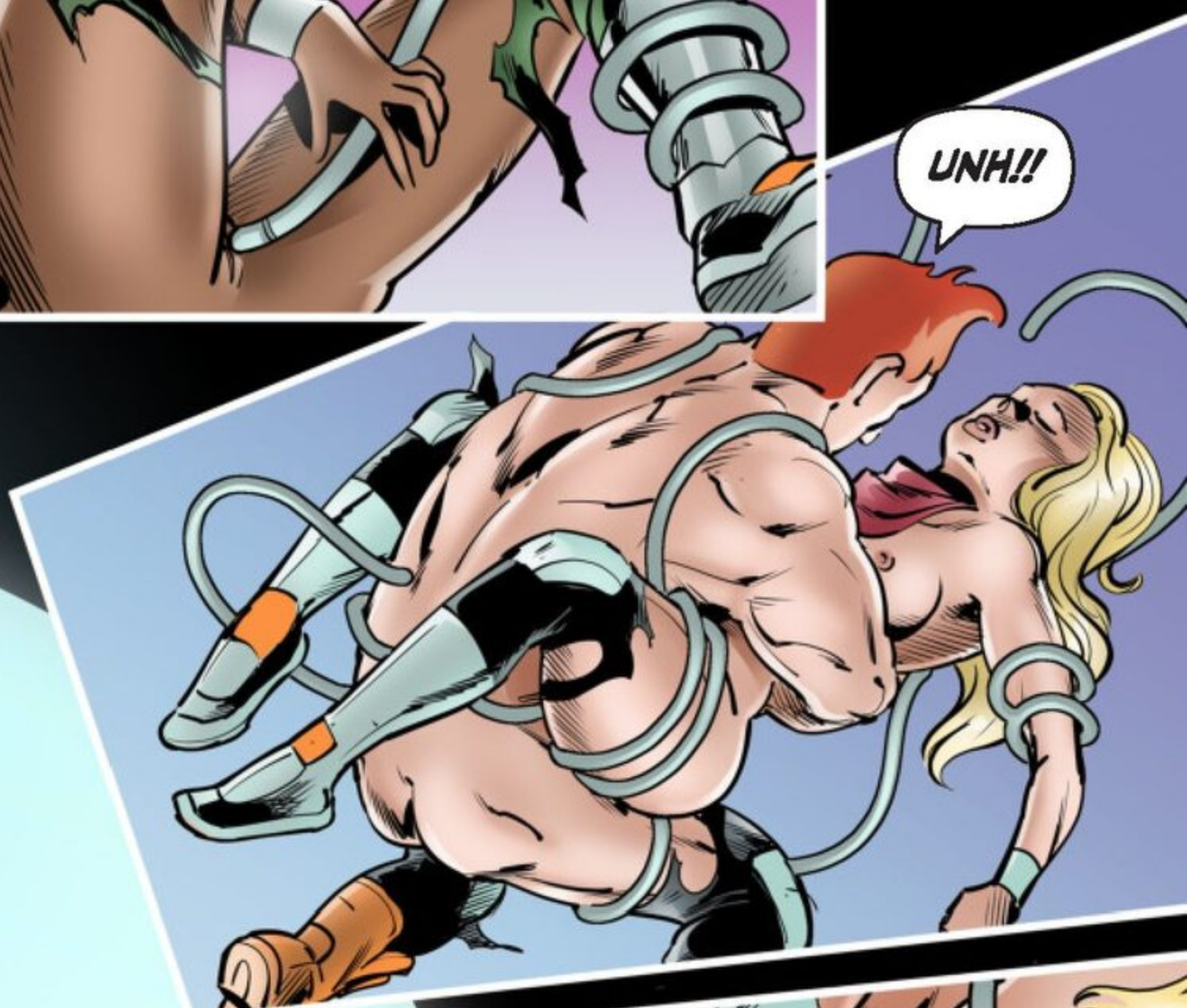


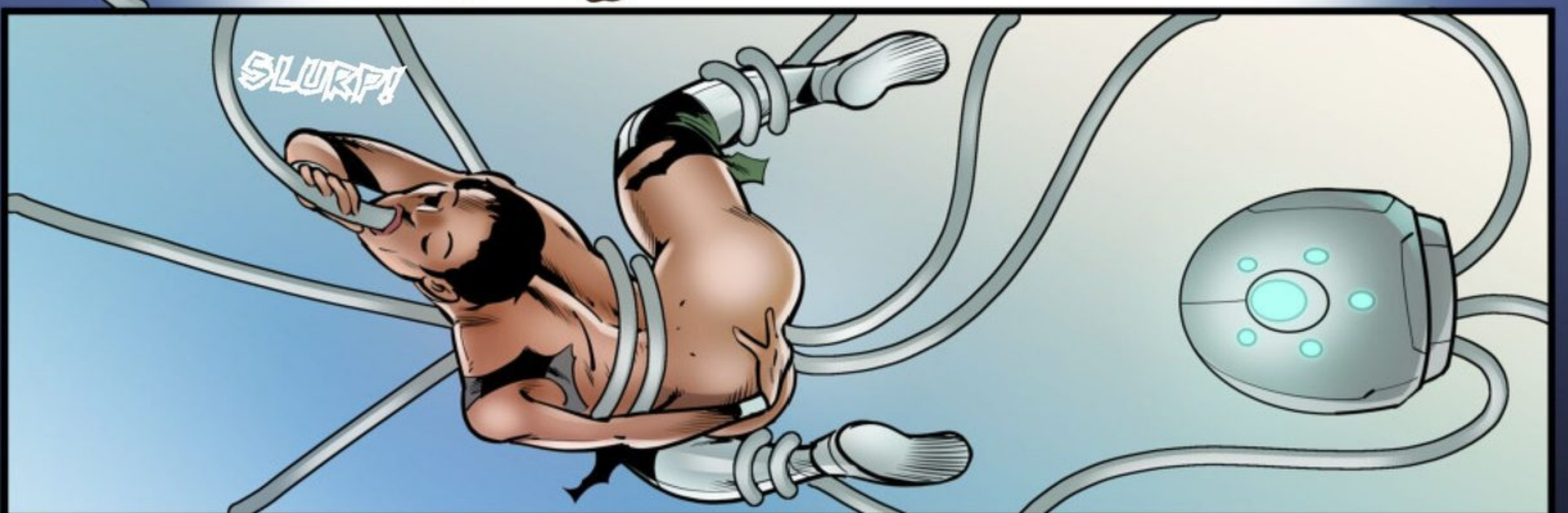
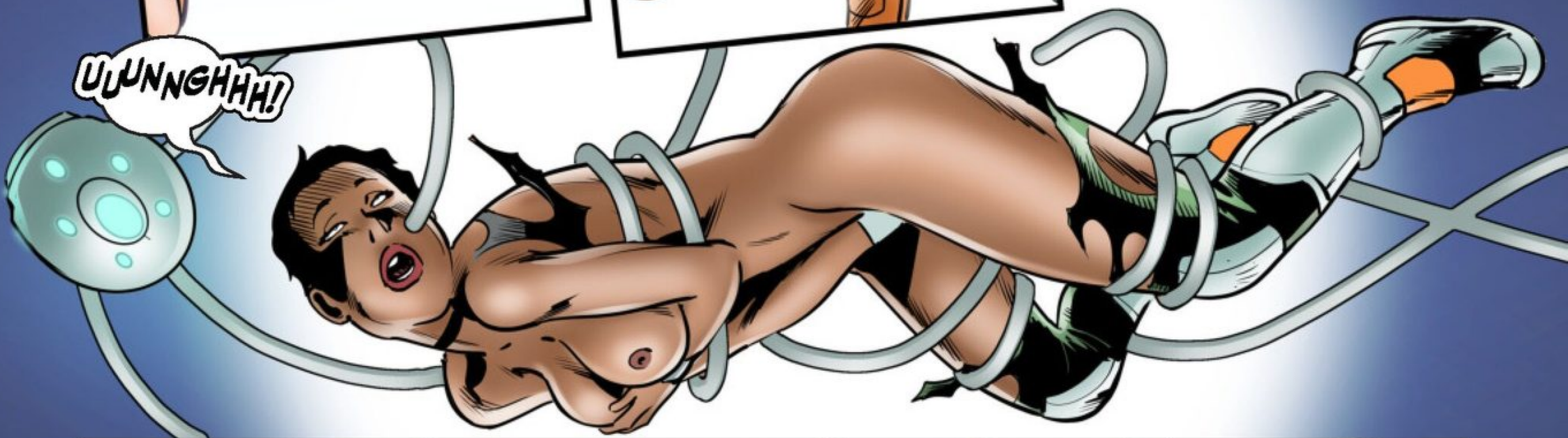
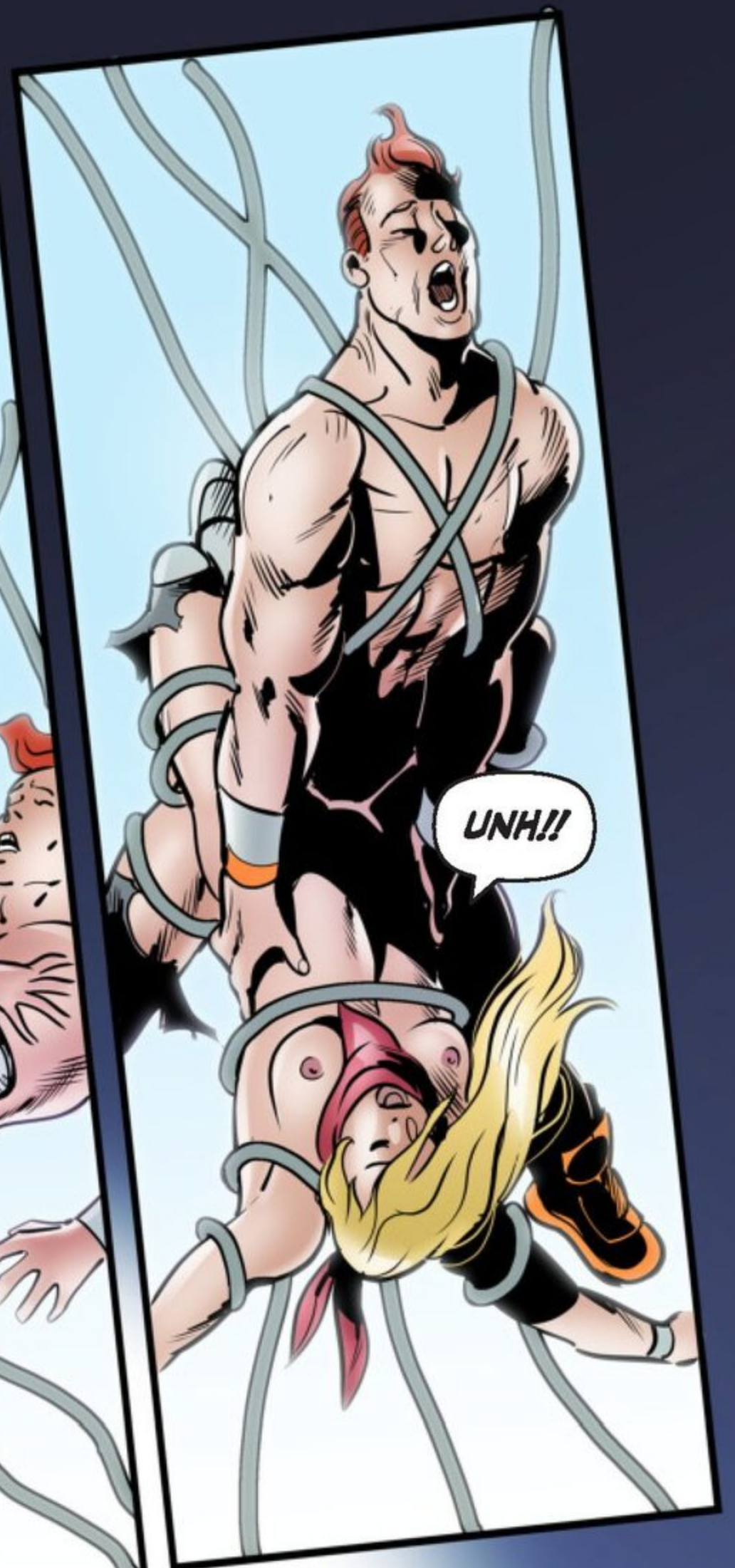
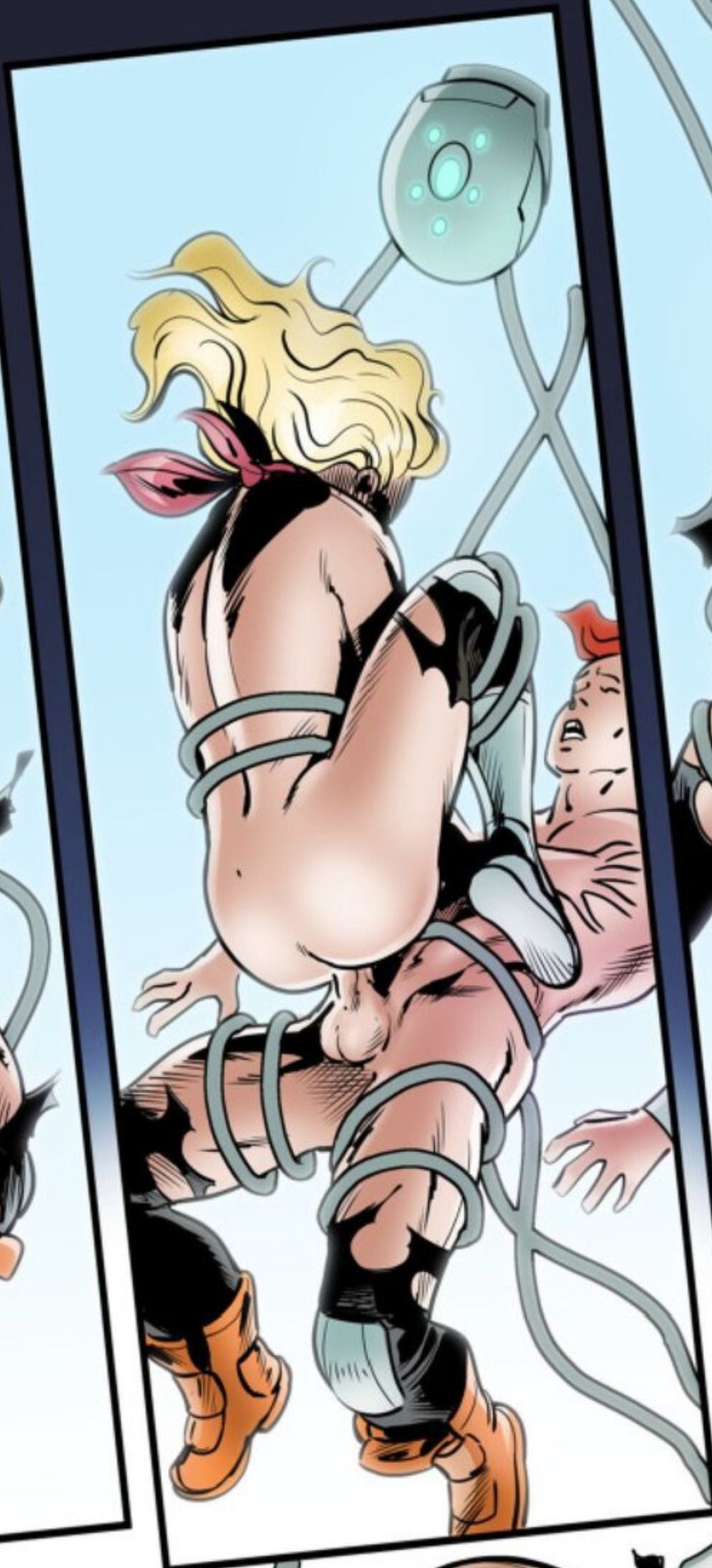
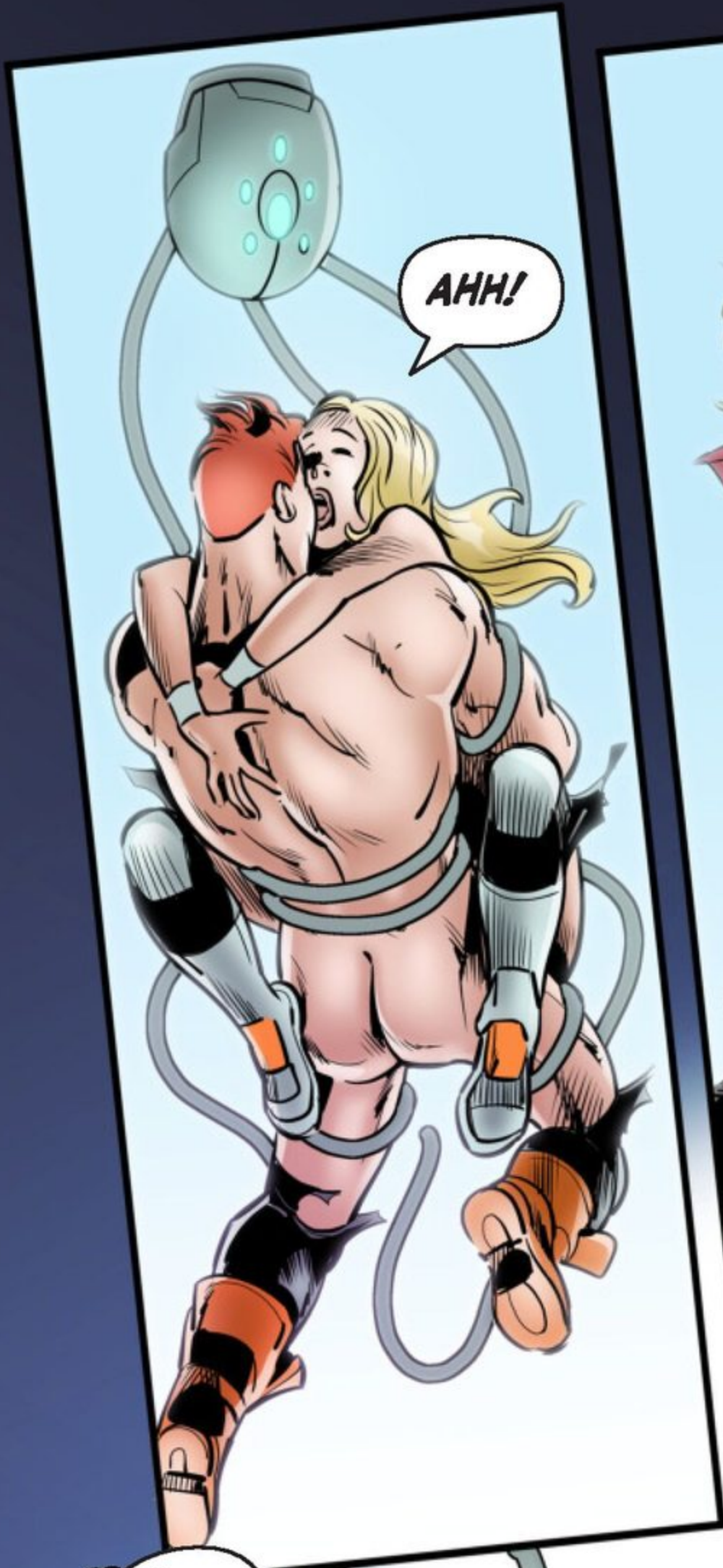
CONTROL..

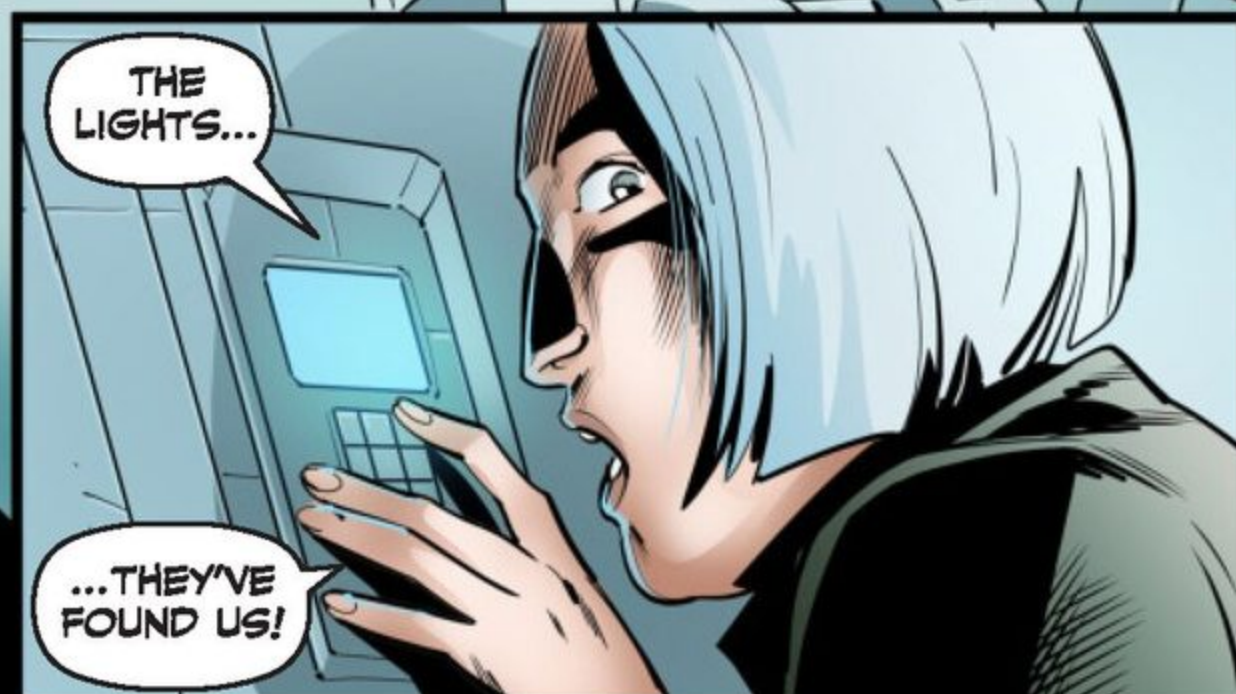
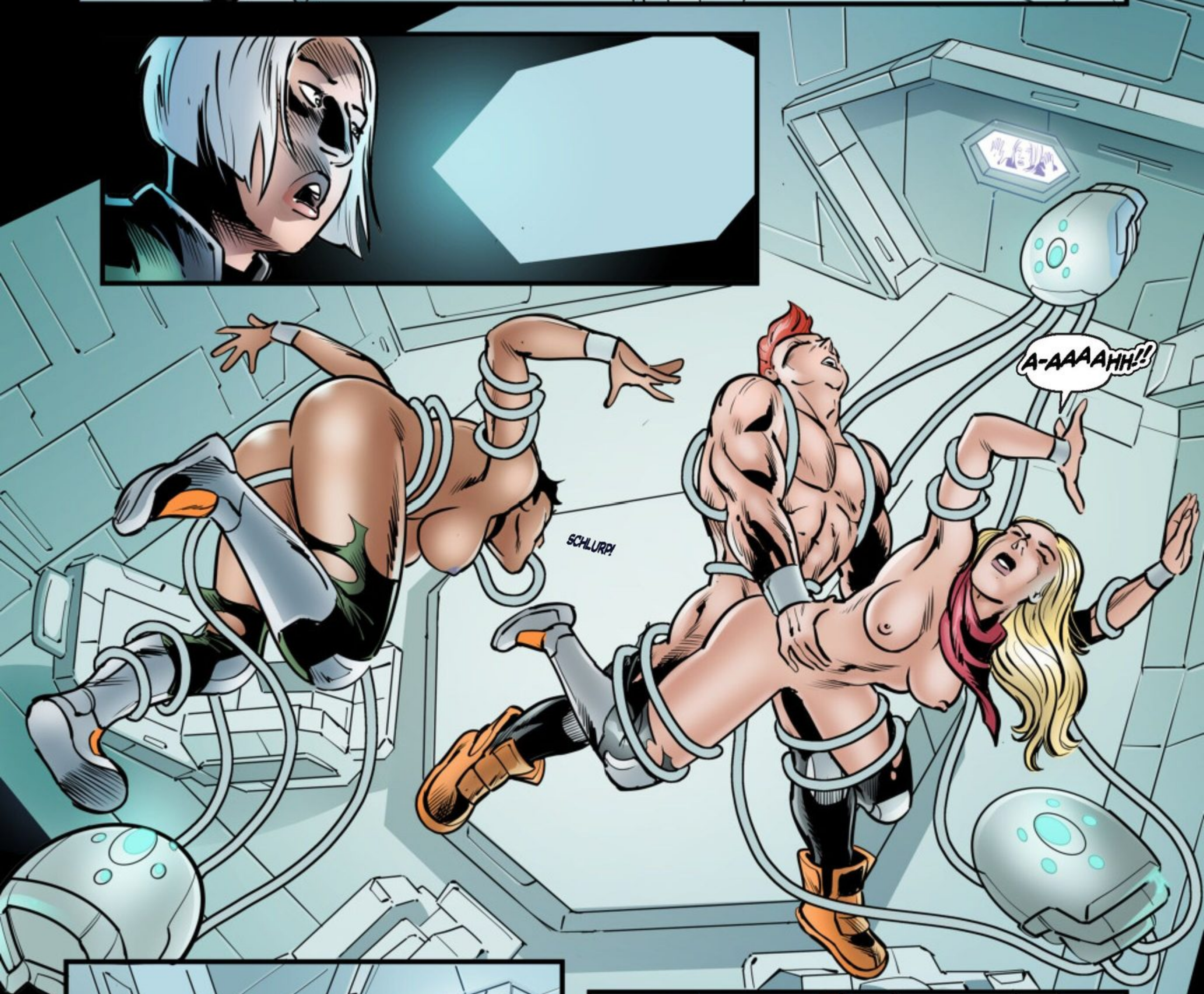
YOU WERE NEVER IN CONTROL.











THE AEOLUS.

IT'S TIME.

YES,
DOCTOR
FORTNER.

FW
OO
SH

CAN
YOU STILL
HEAR ME?

YES.

I NEED YOU TO TELL ME IF YOU SEE ANY SIGNS OF THE INVADERS.



NOTHING SO FAR.

THERE SHOULD BE A MEMBRANE, FOR LACK OF BETTER WORD.

A THIN LAYER THAT SEPARATES OUR DIMENSION FROM THEIRS, LIKE A DISTORTED WINDOW.



I CAN SEE IT. THERE'S A... **SHIMMER** TO IT.

GO THROUGH IT, SAMUEL. WE NEED TO SEE IF YOU CAN.



GOING.



I...I'VE DONE IT.

THIS IS GREAT NEWS, SAMUEL! NOW, THAT WE KNOW YOU CAN CROSS IT, PLEASE...TURN AROUND AND COME BACK SO WE CAN IMMEDIATELY PREPARE FOR YOUR NEXT TRIP.

SAMUEL?

YOU COMING?

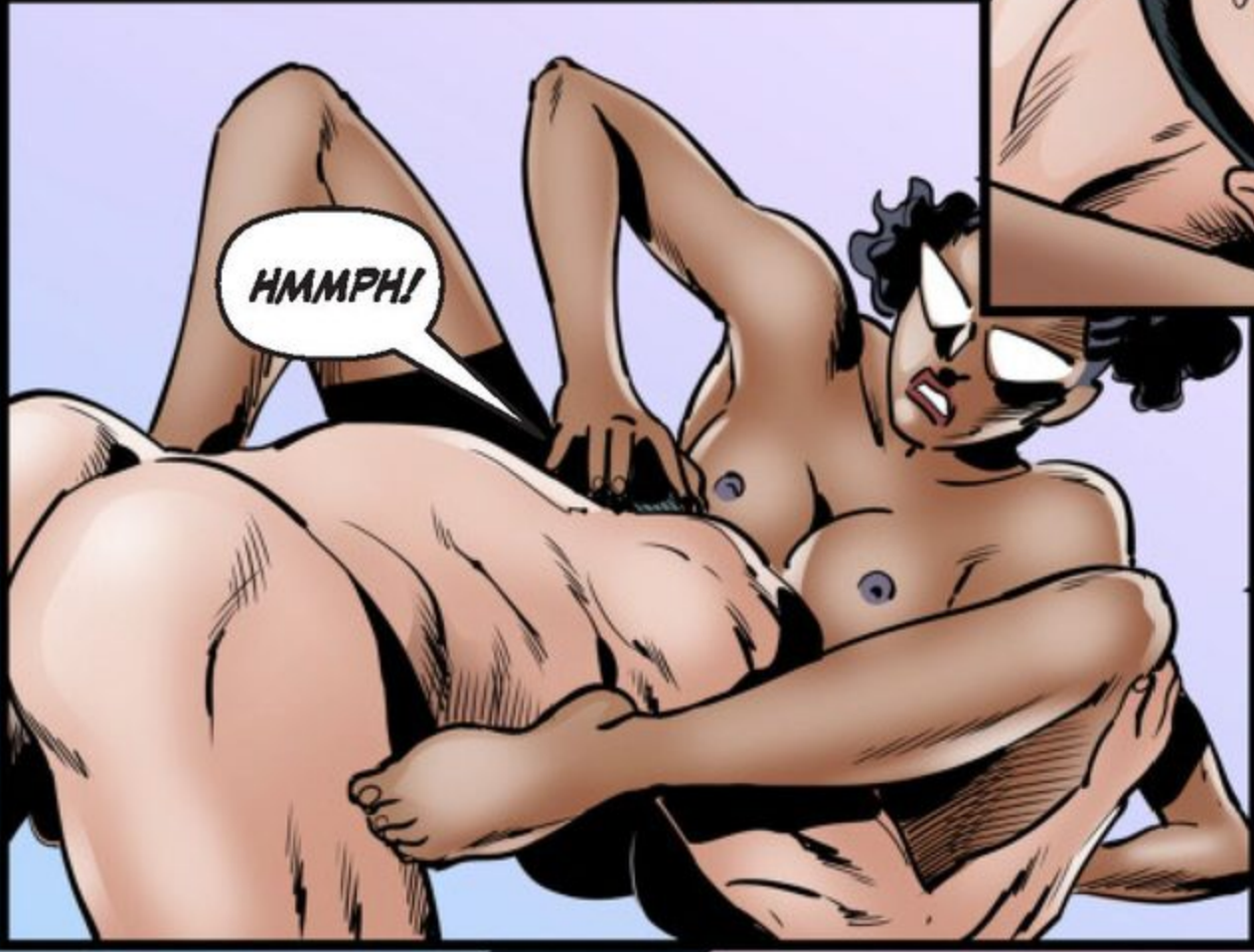
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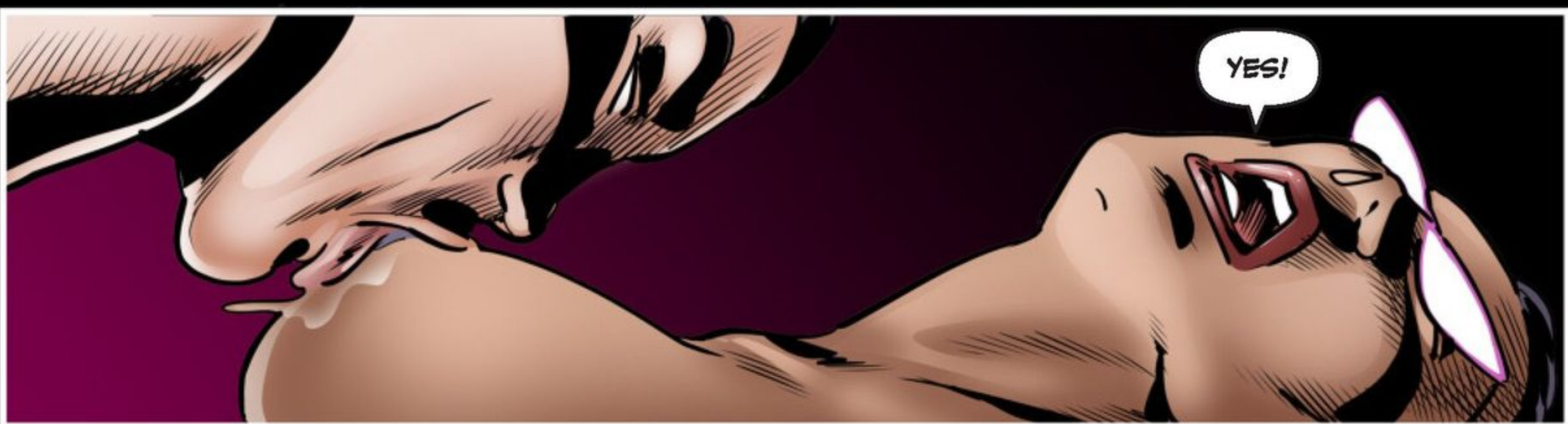
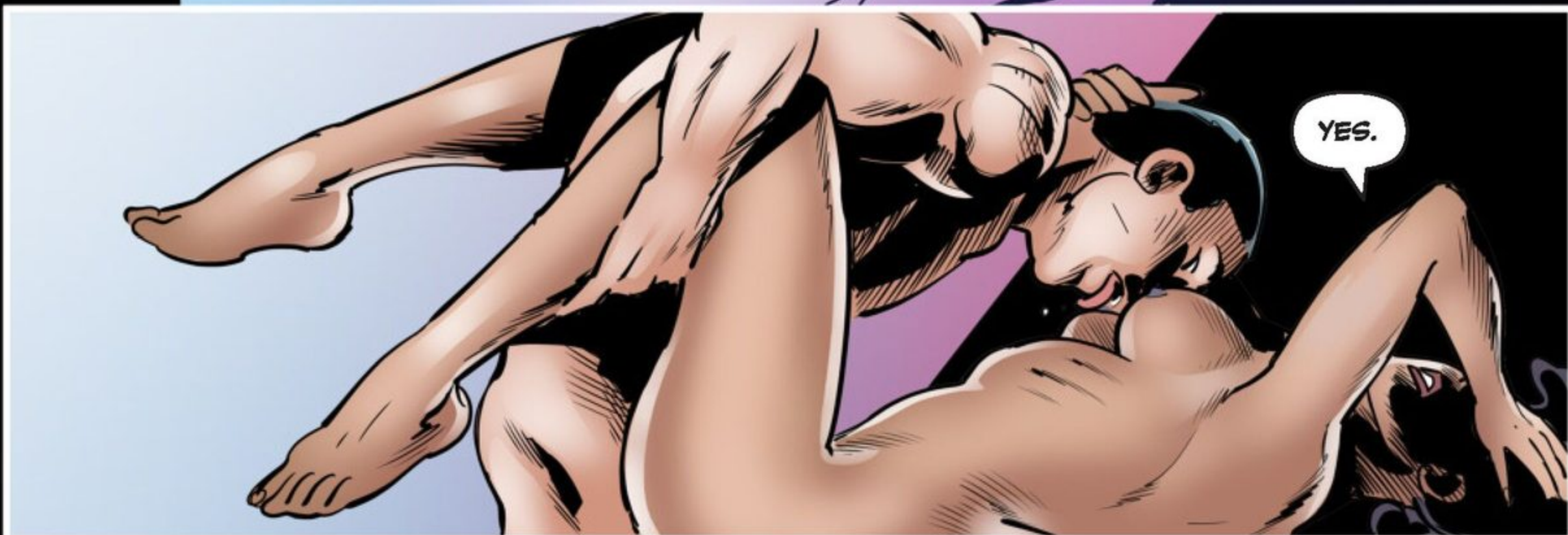
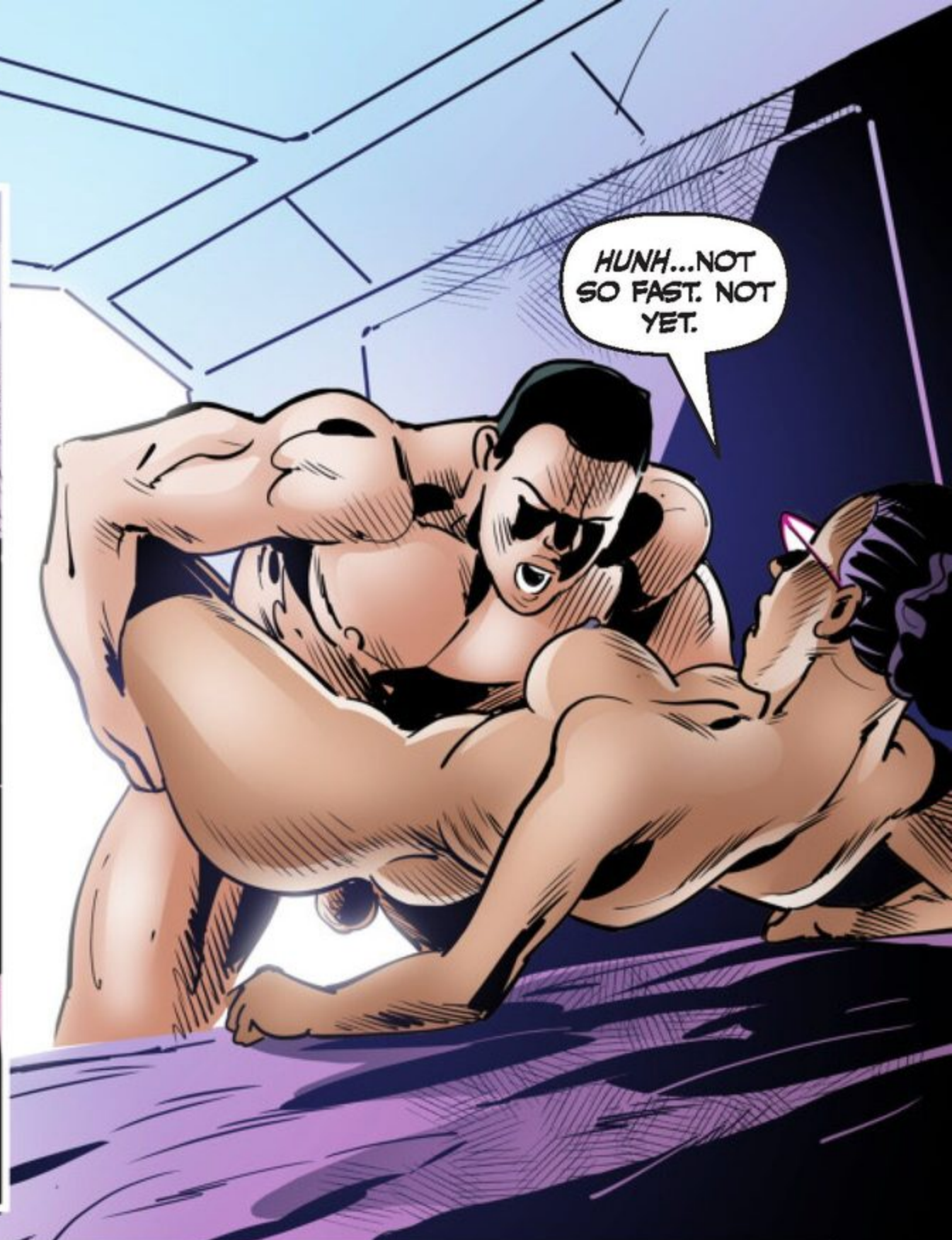
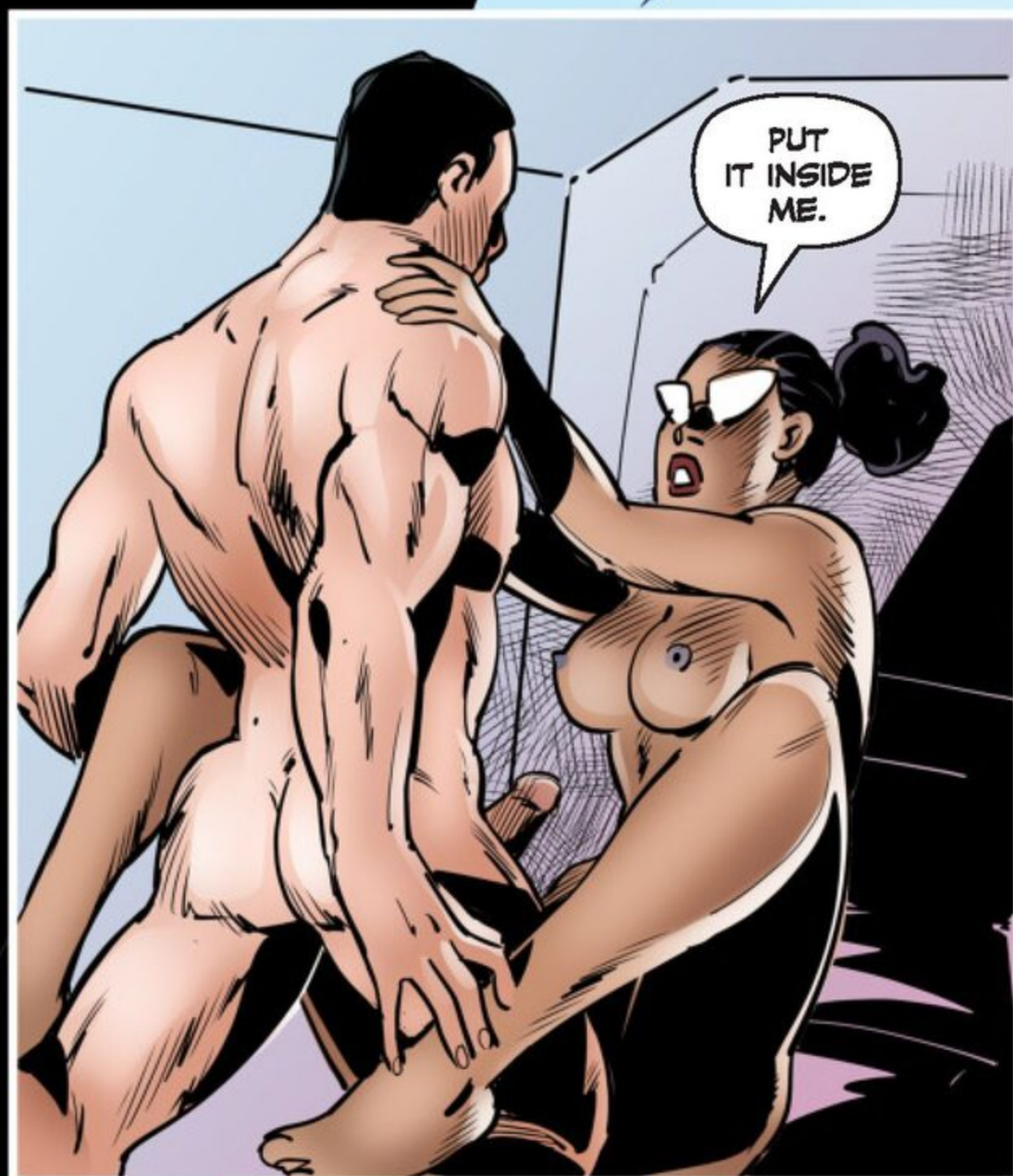
NO.

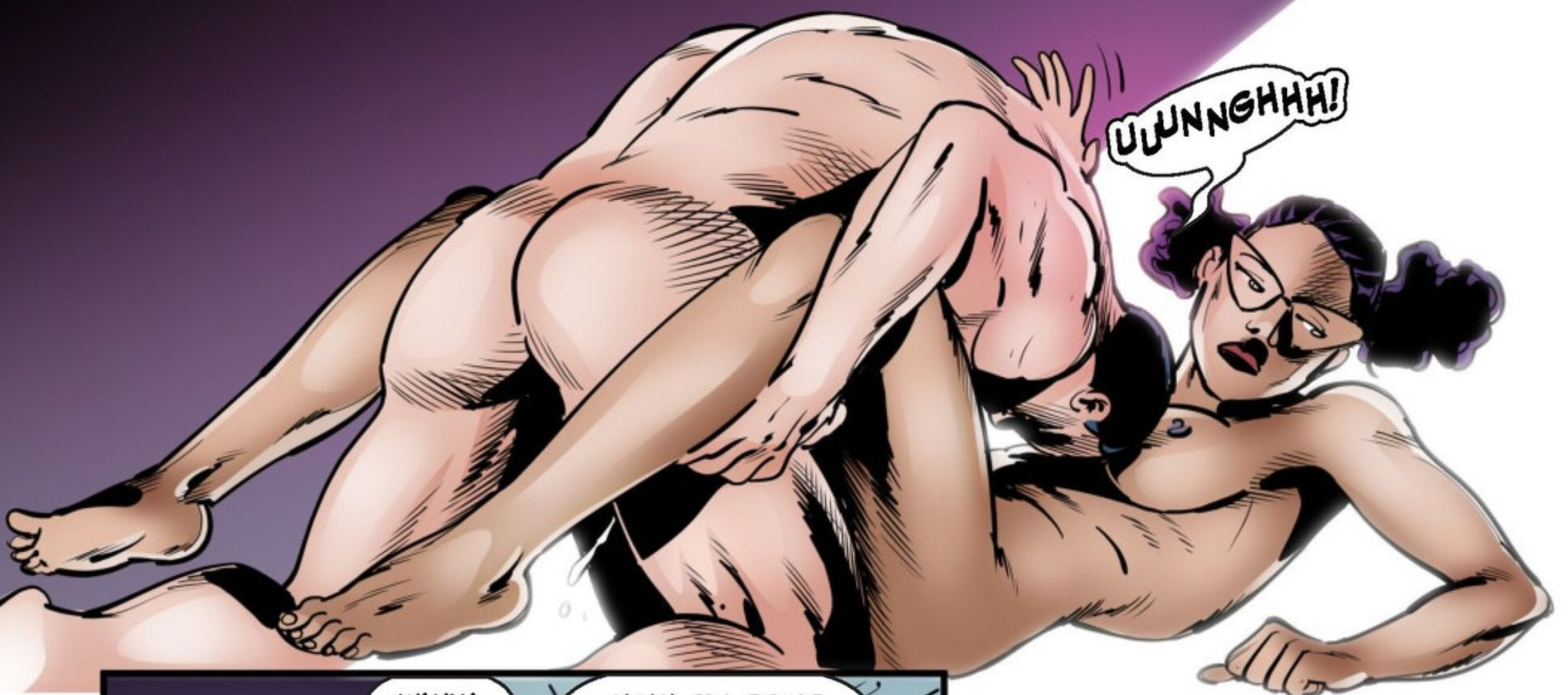
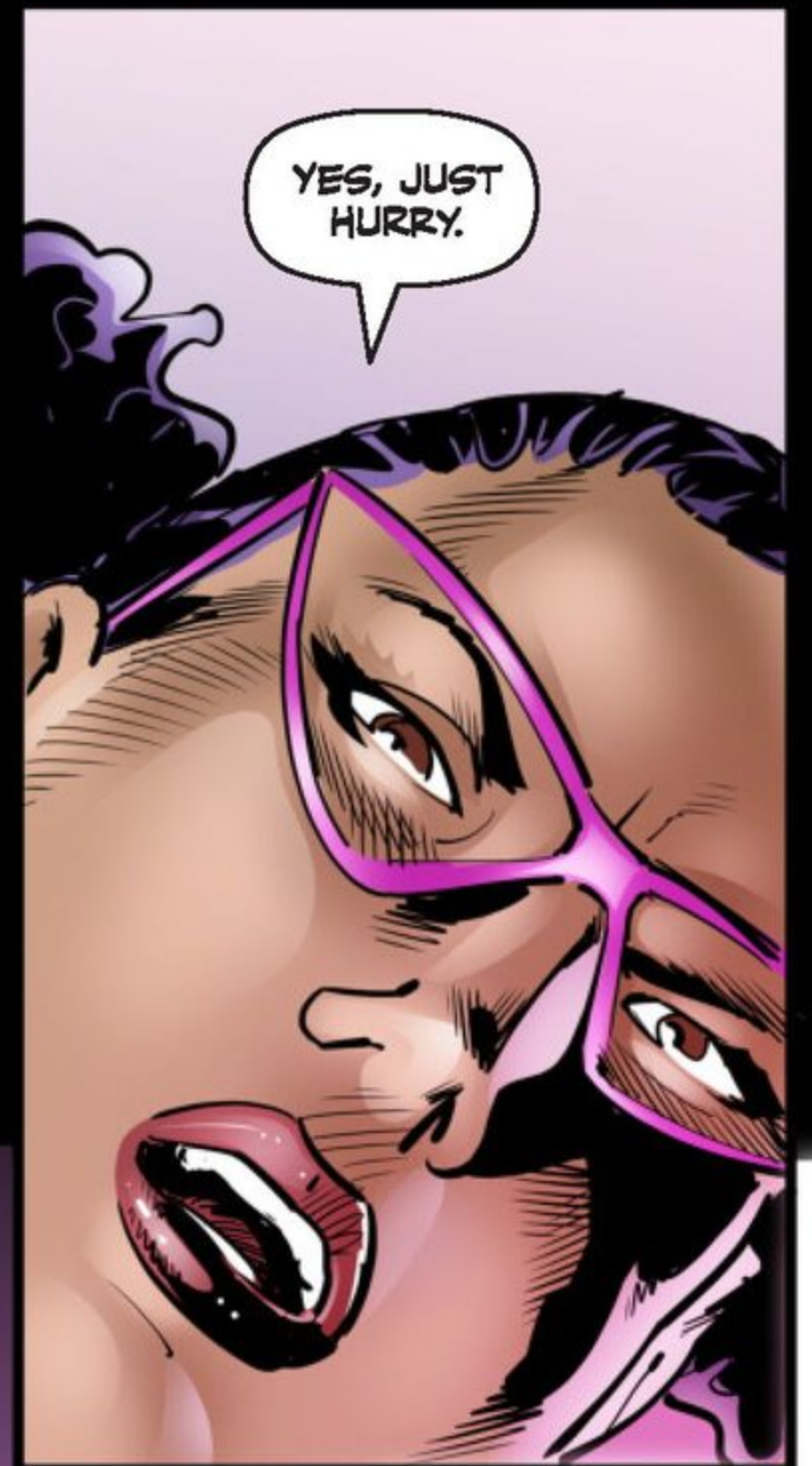


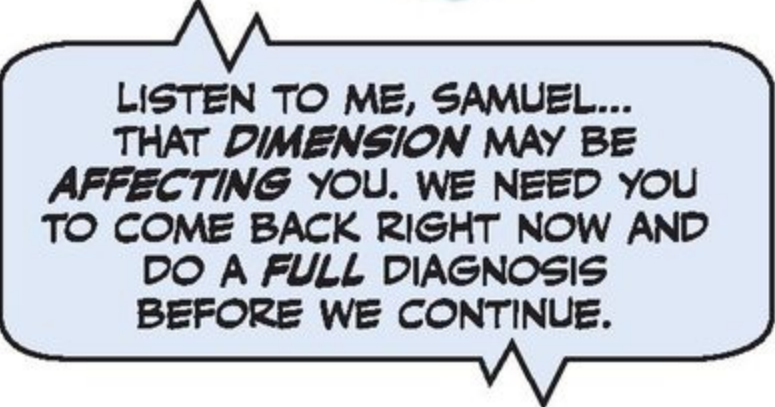


NO, KEEP GOING.







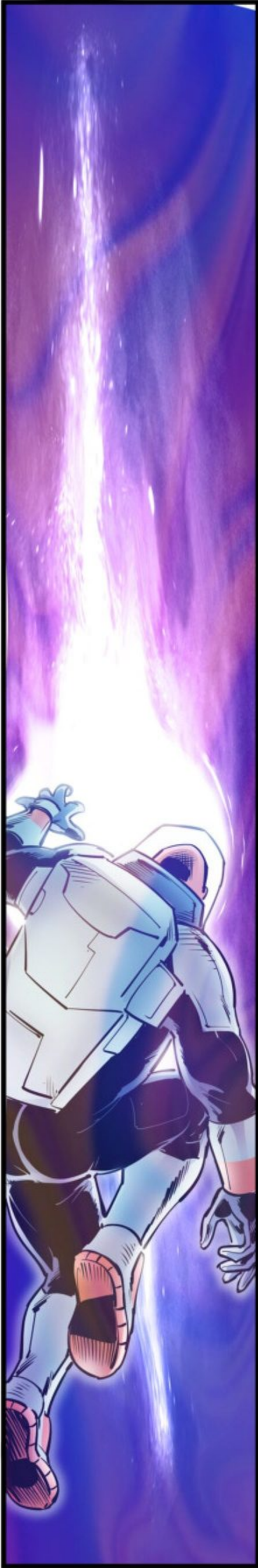




DOCTOR?



YES?



NOTHING,
I'M COMING
BACK.







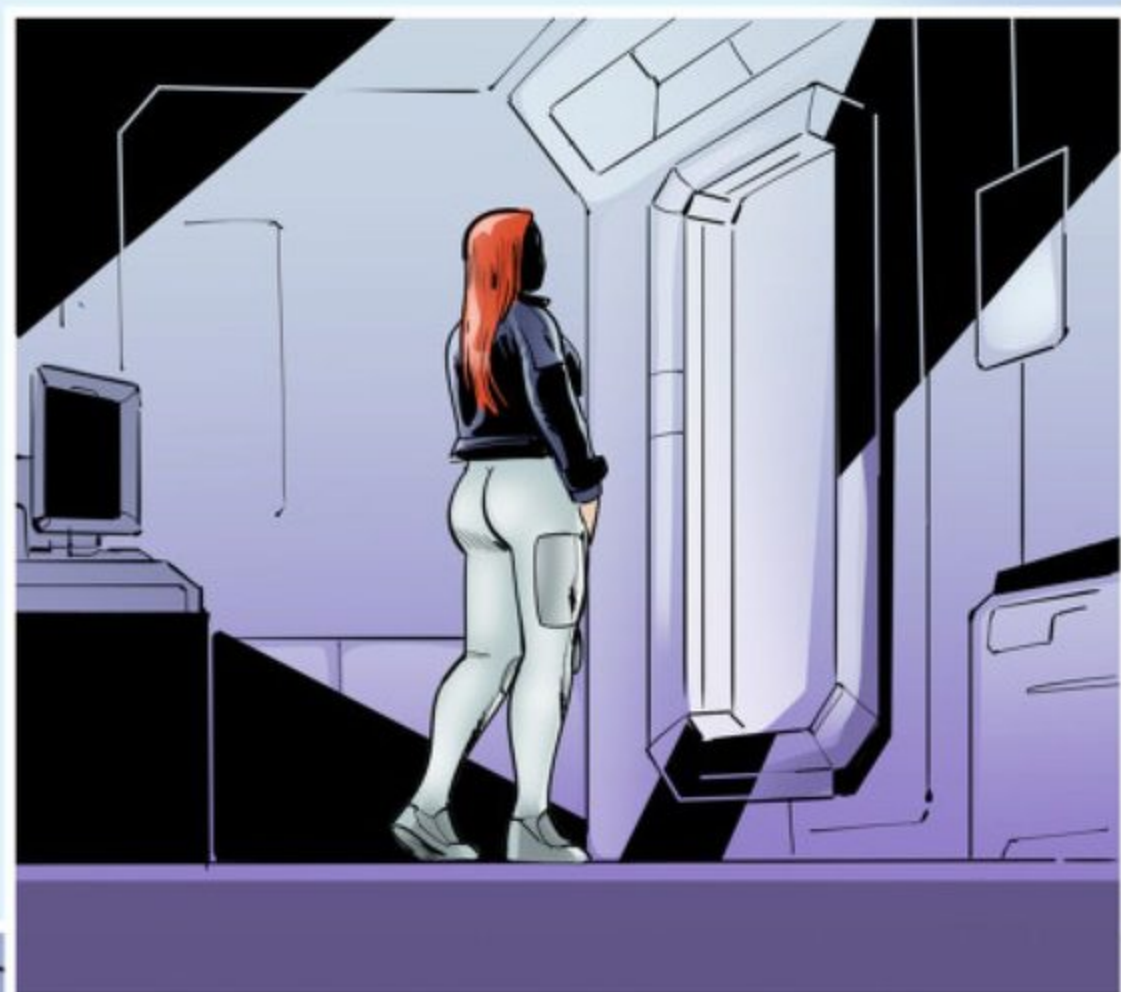
THE AEOLUS.

JUST TO KEEP
YOU UPDATED,
SAMUEL'S ON HIS
WAY BACK. AND PAGE
...HE'S FINE.

THANK YOU, DR.
TINTSO. YOU DON'T
KNOW HOW MUCH
THAT MEANS
TO ME.

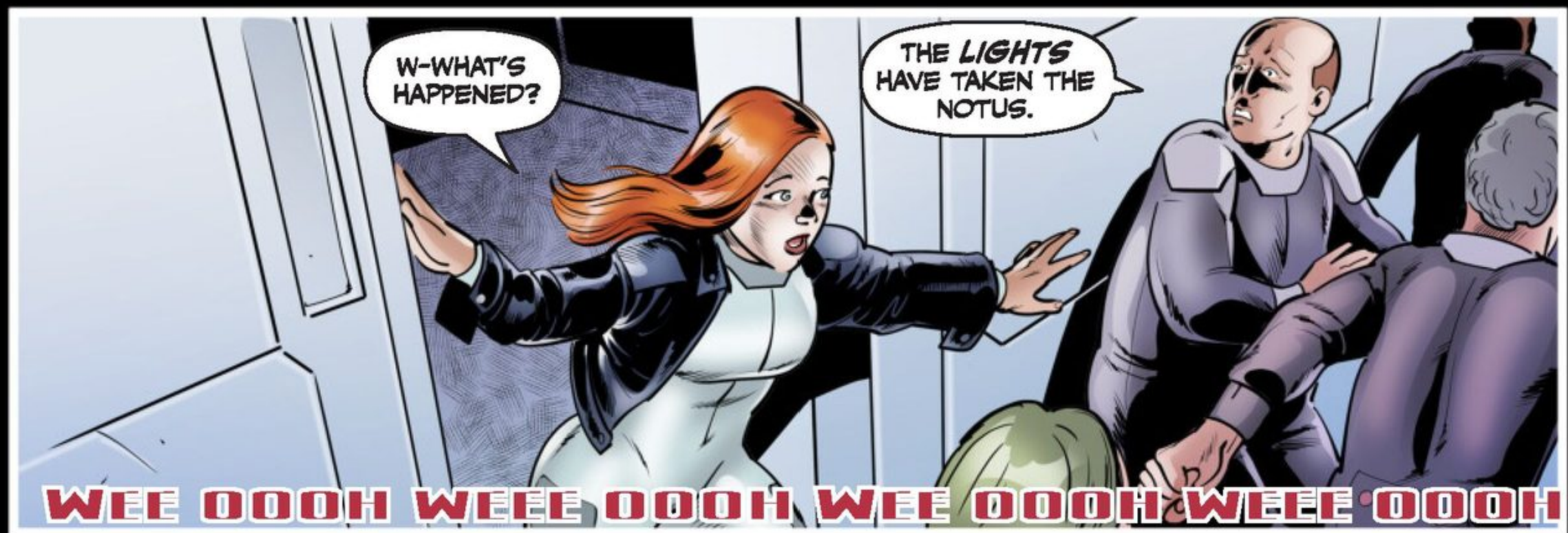


HURRY BACK,
SAMUEL.



WEEOOOHWEEOOOOHWEE









RISE,
MORA.



LET
US LOOK
AT YOU...

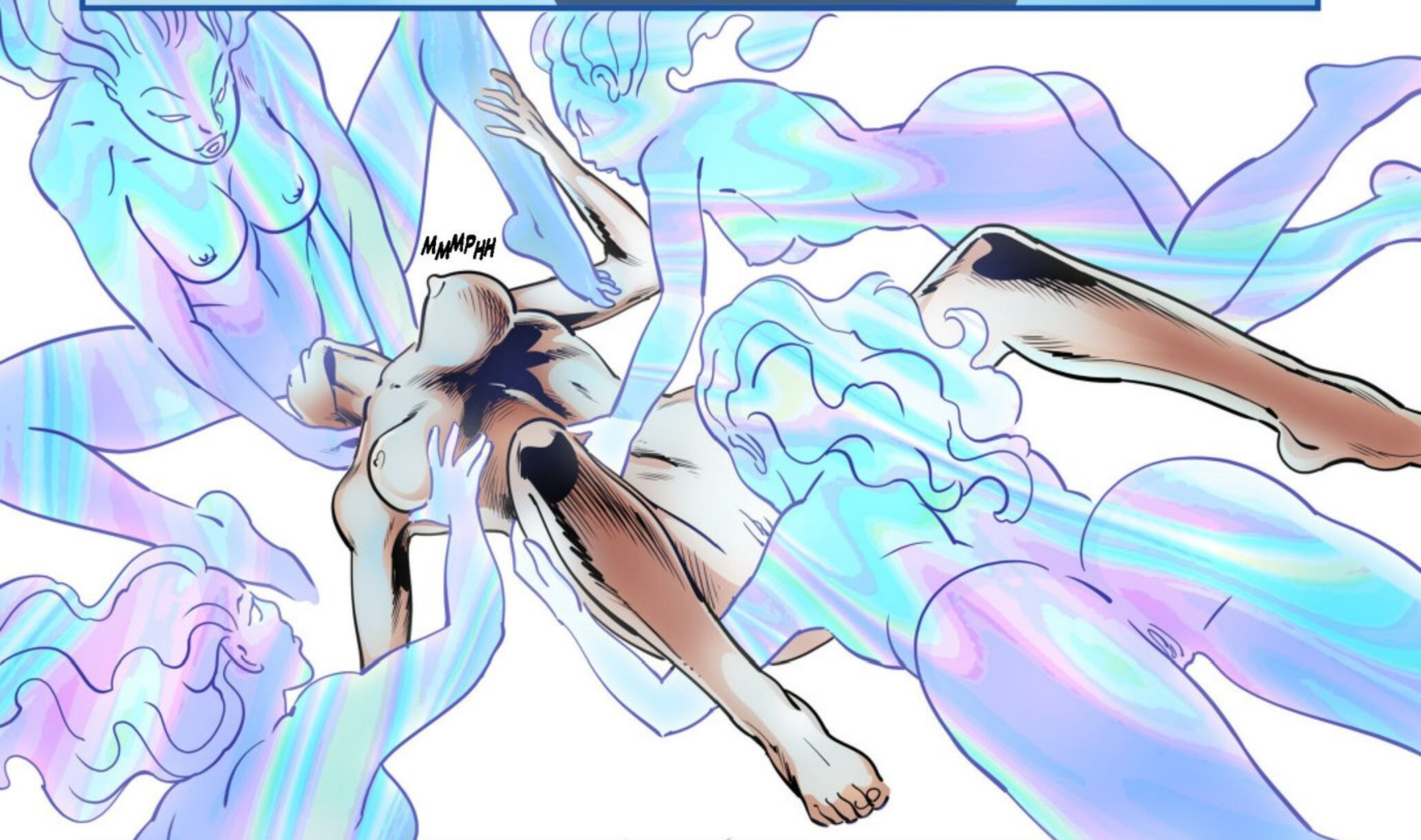


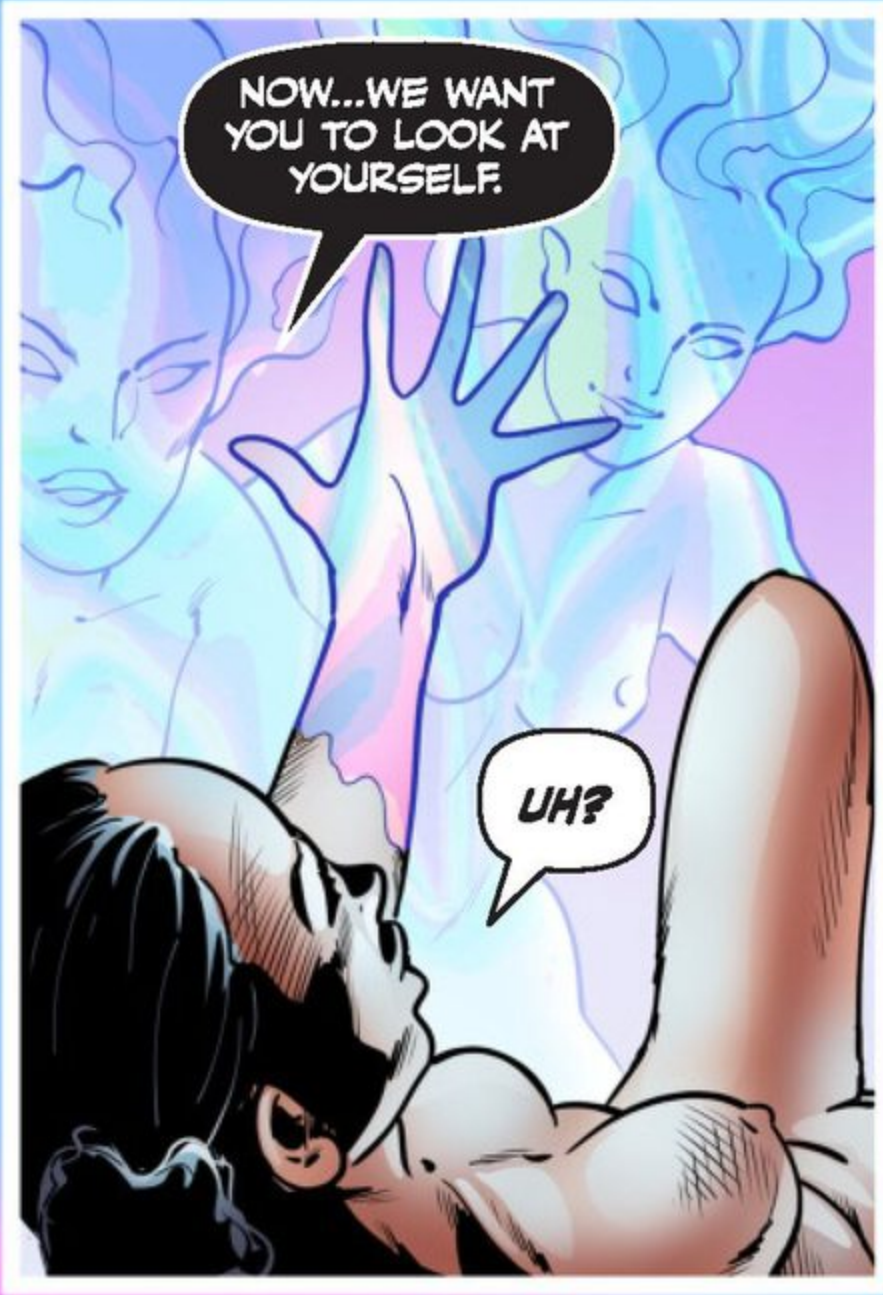
LET
US HAVE
YOU.



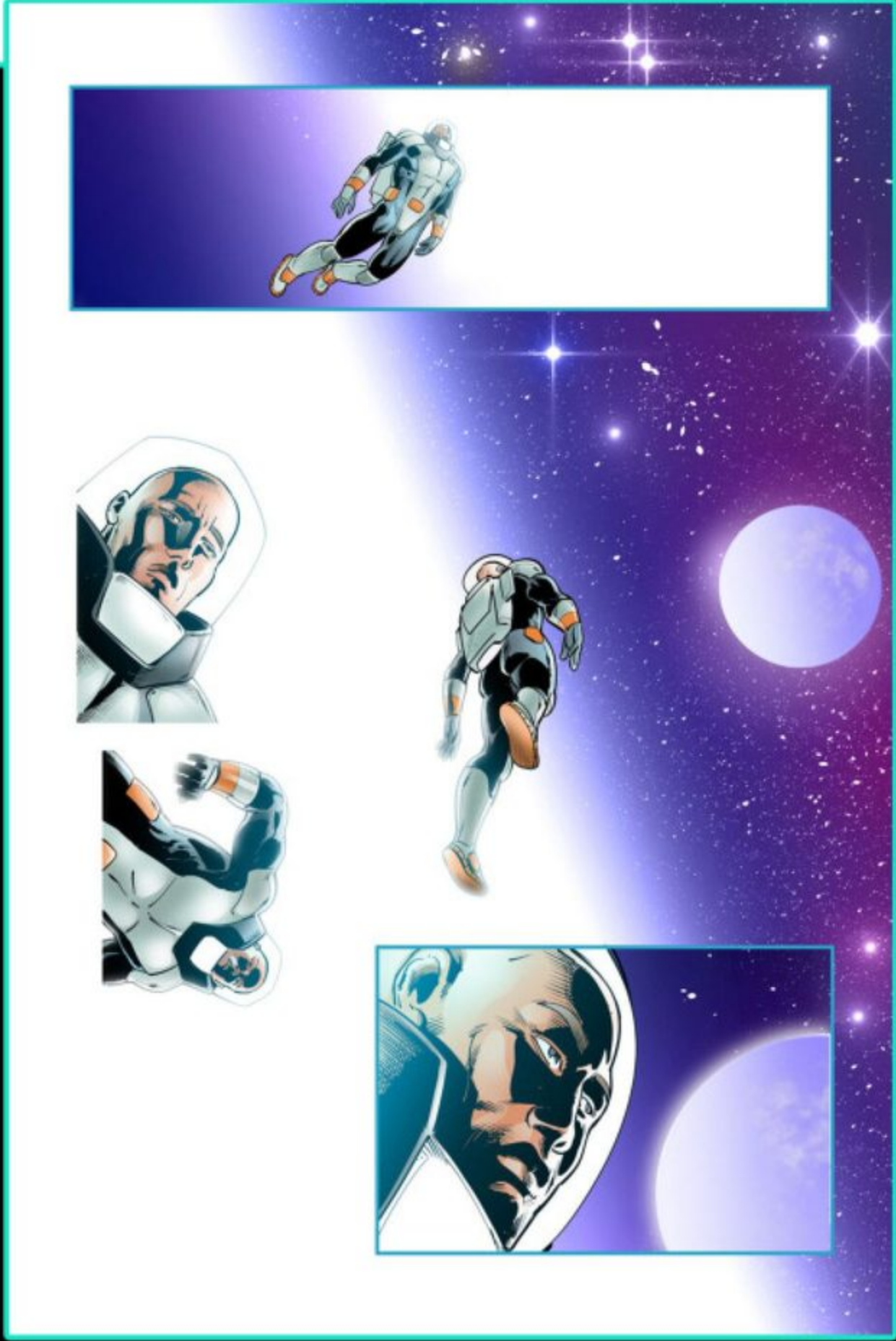
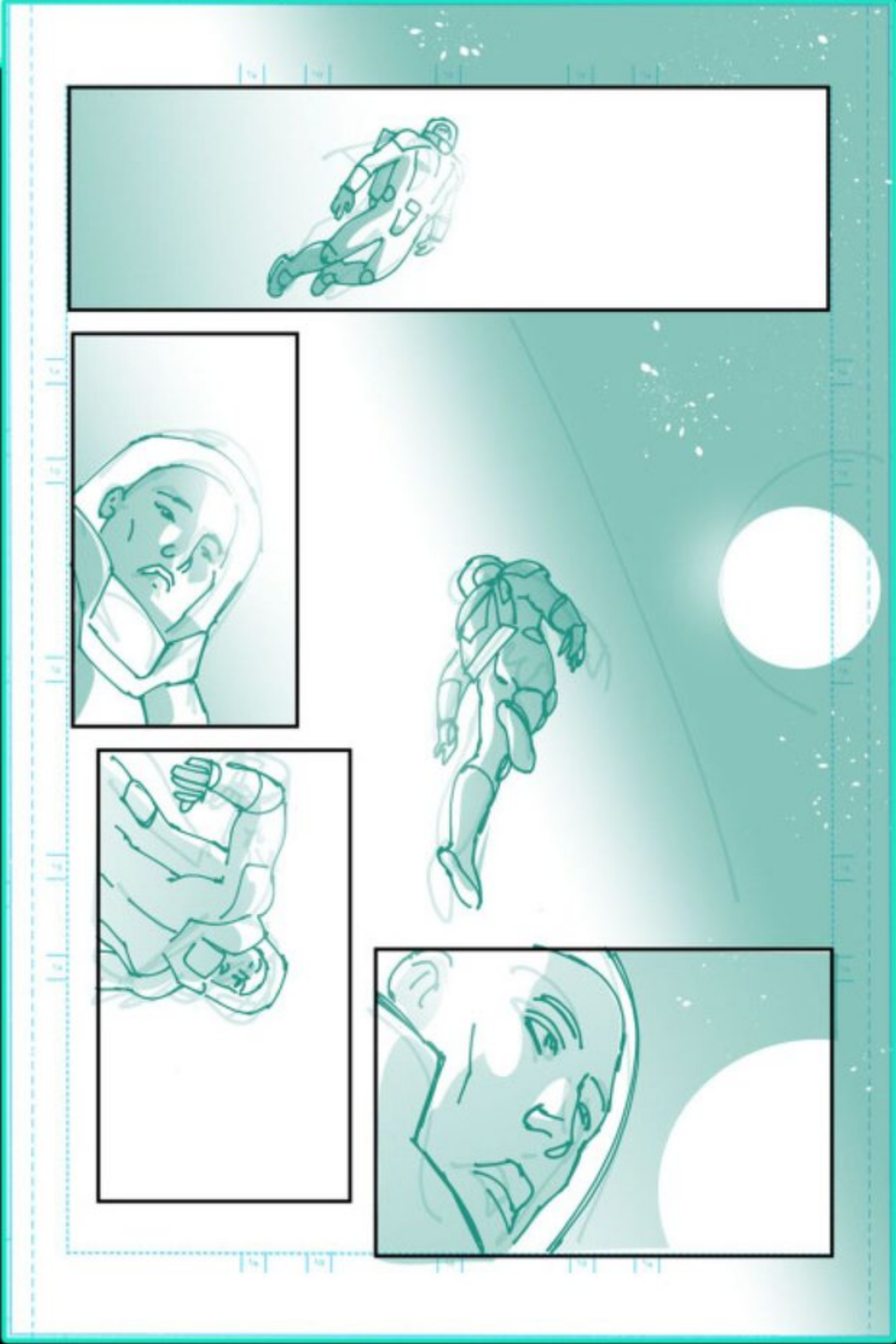
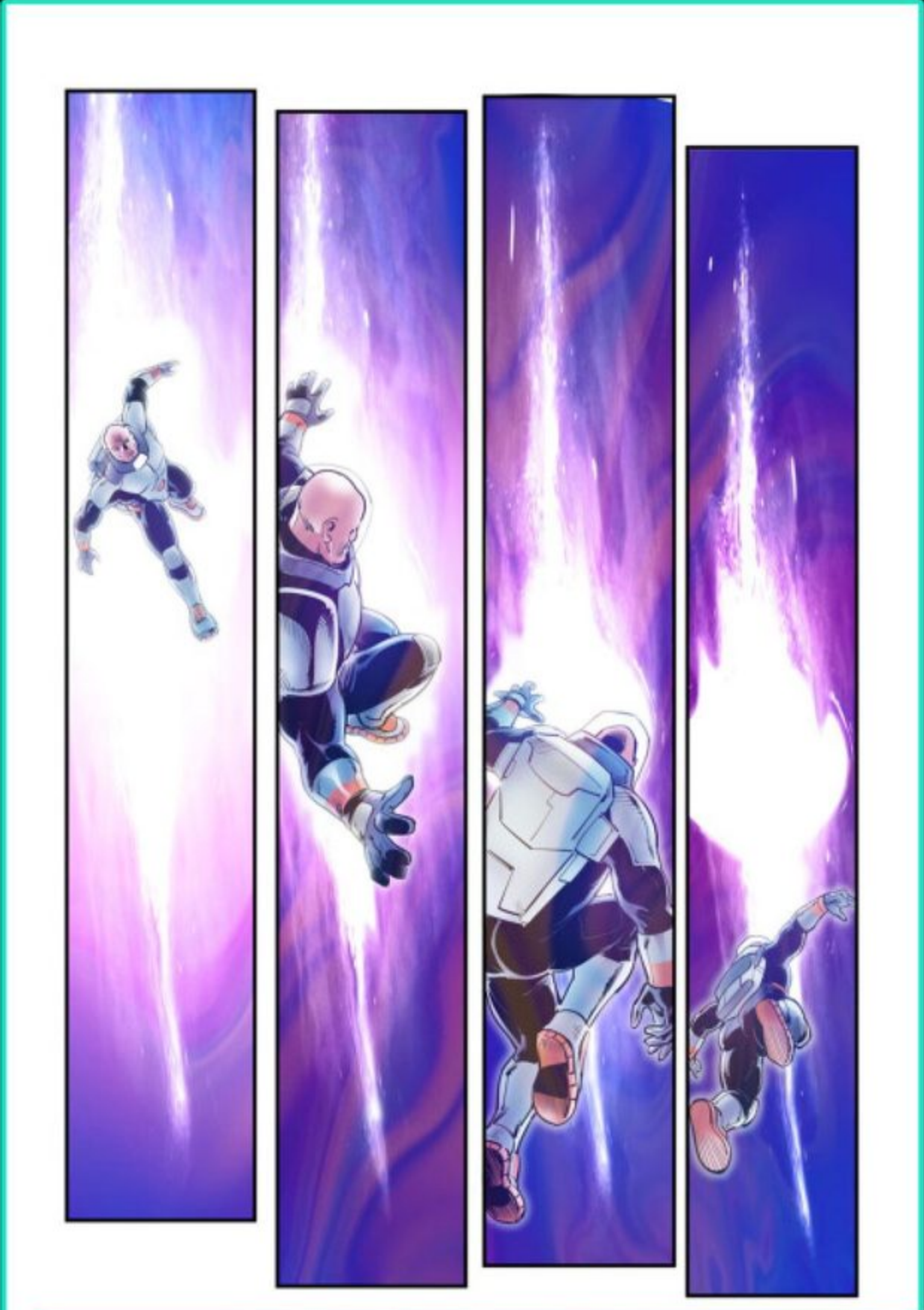
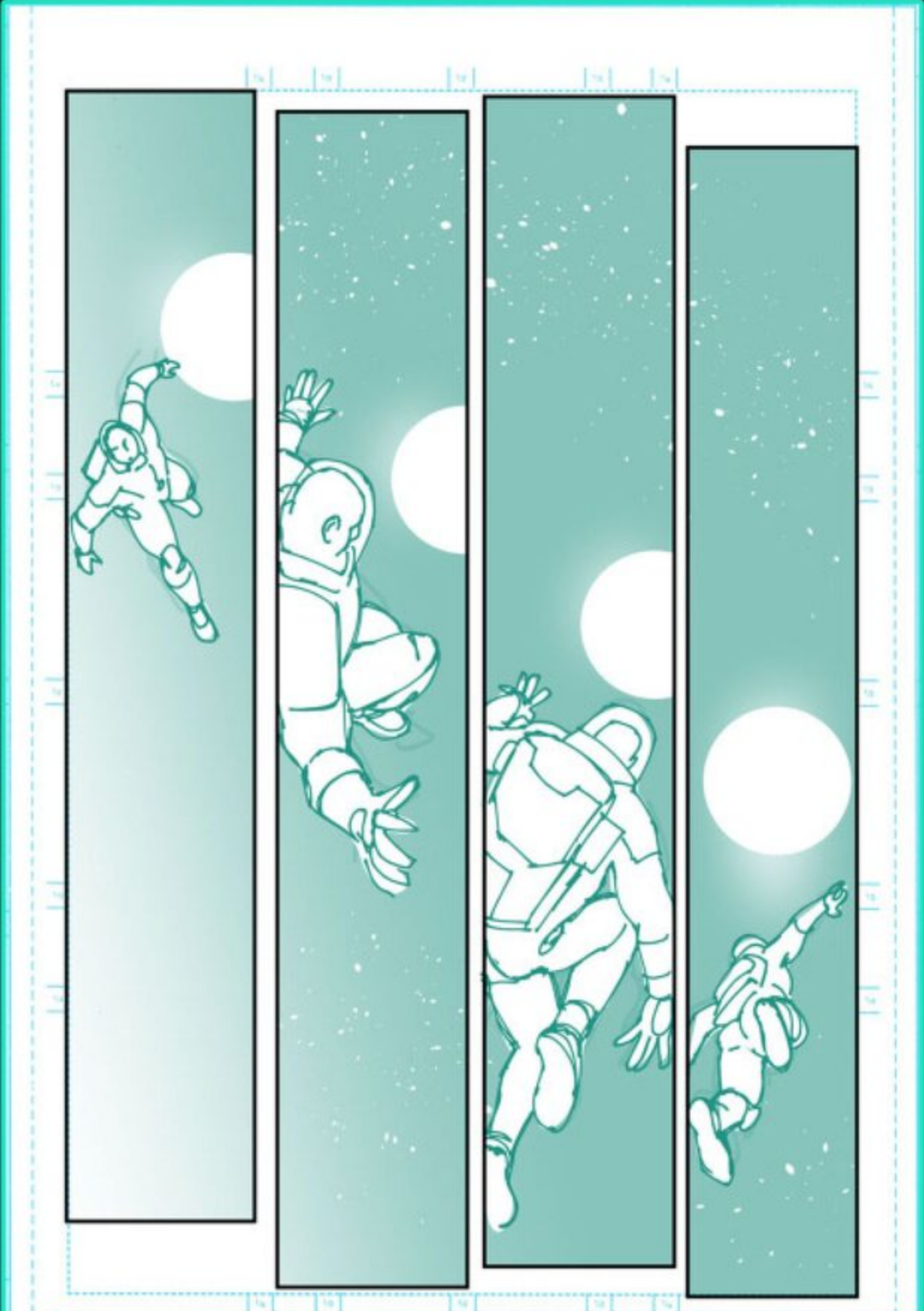
OOH!!







FROM ROUGHS TO FINISH BY EMILIO!

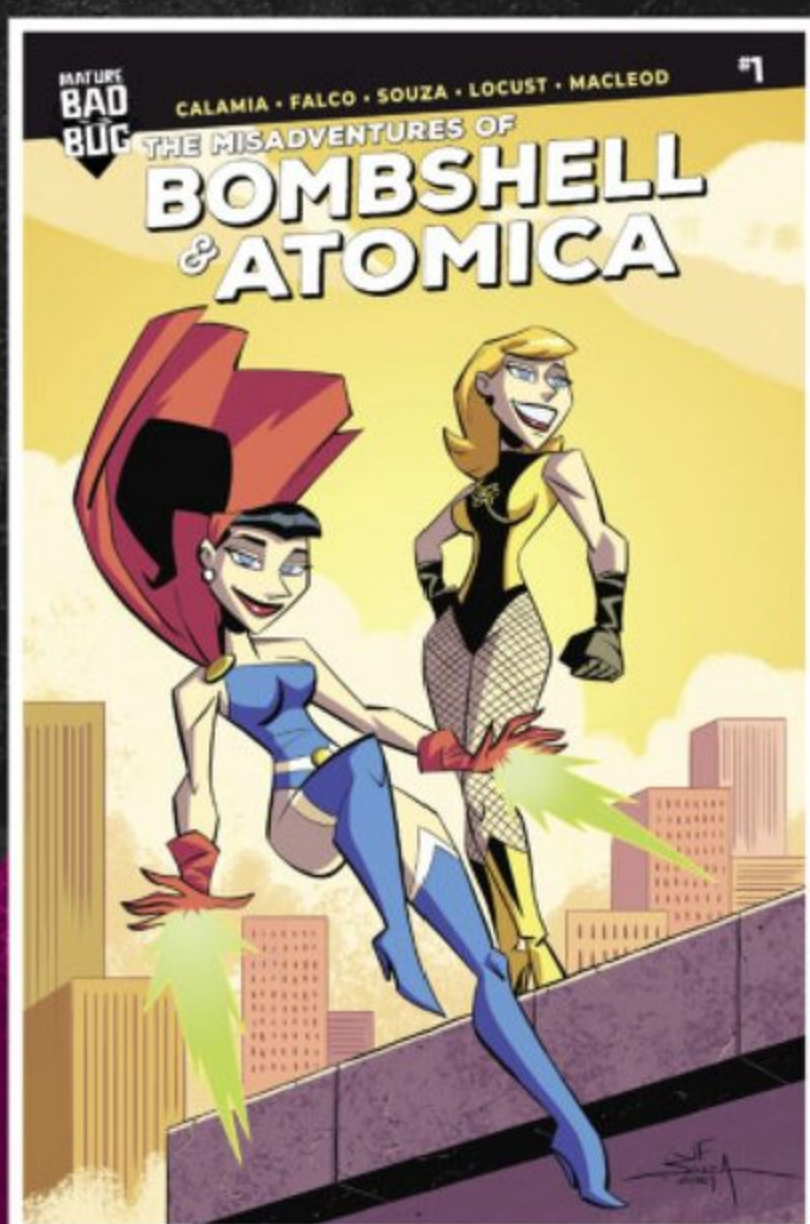
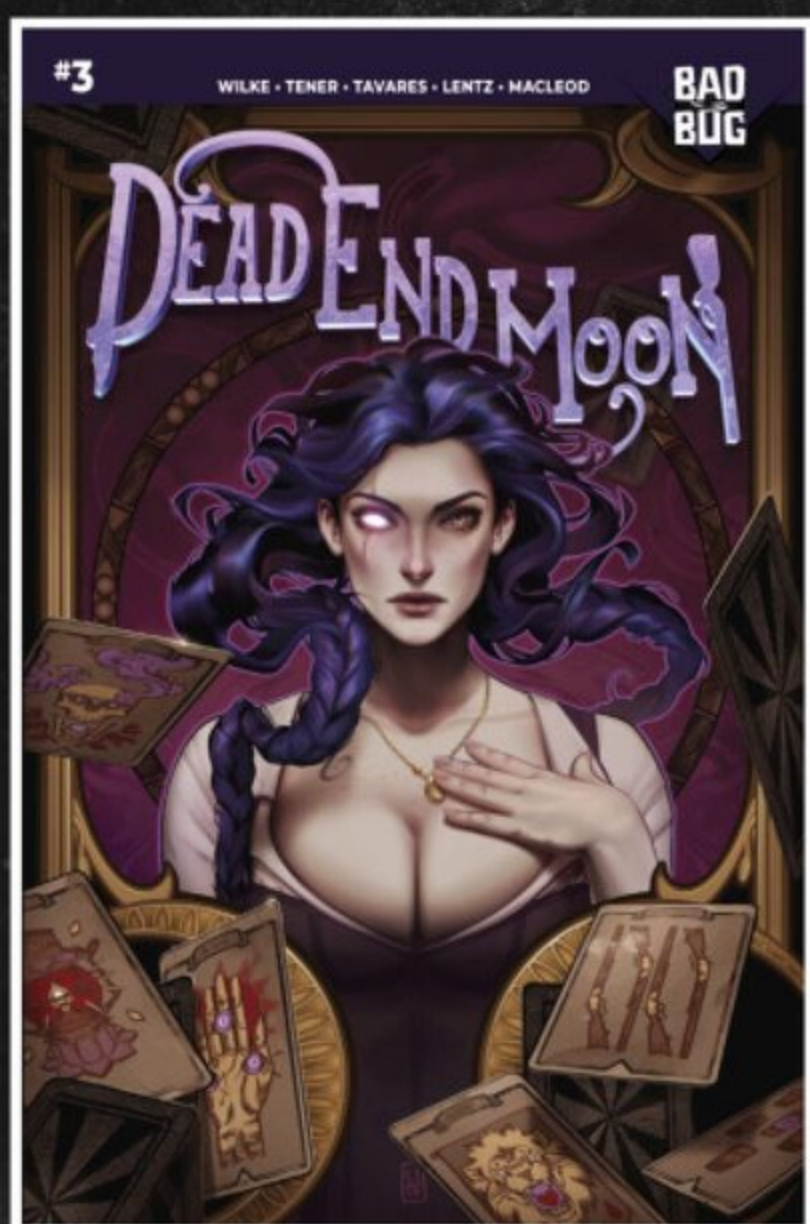
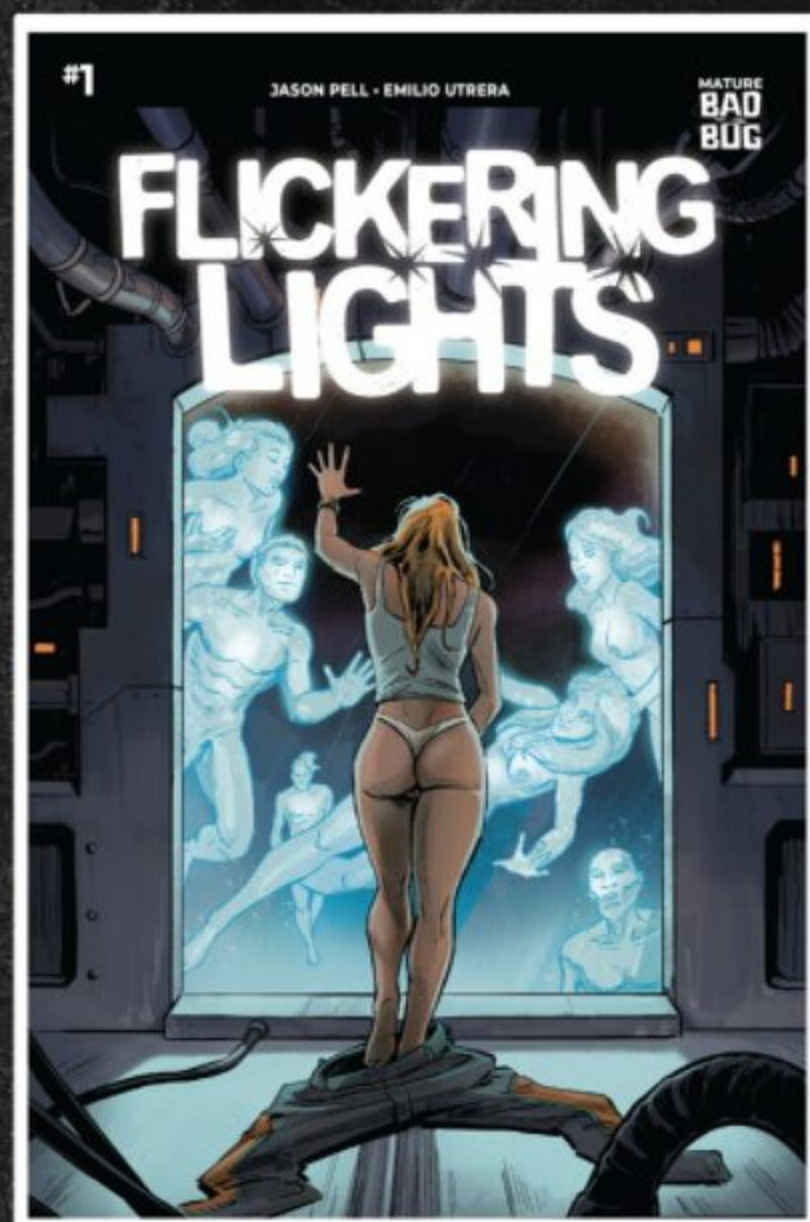




FLICKERING LIGHTS

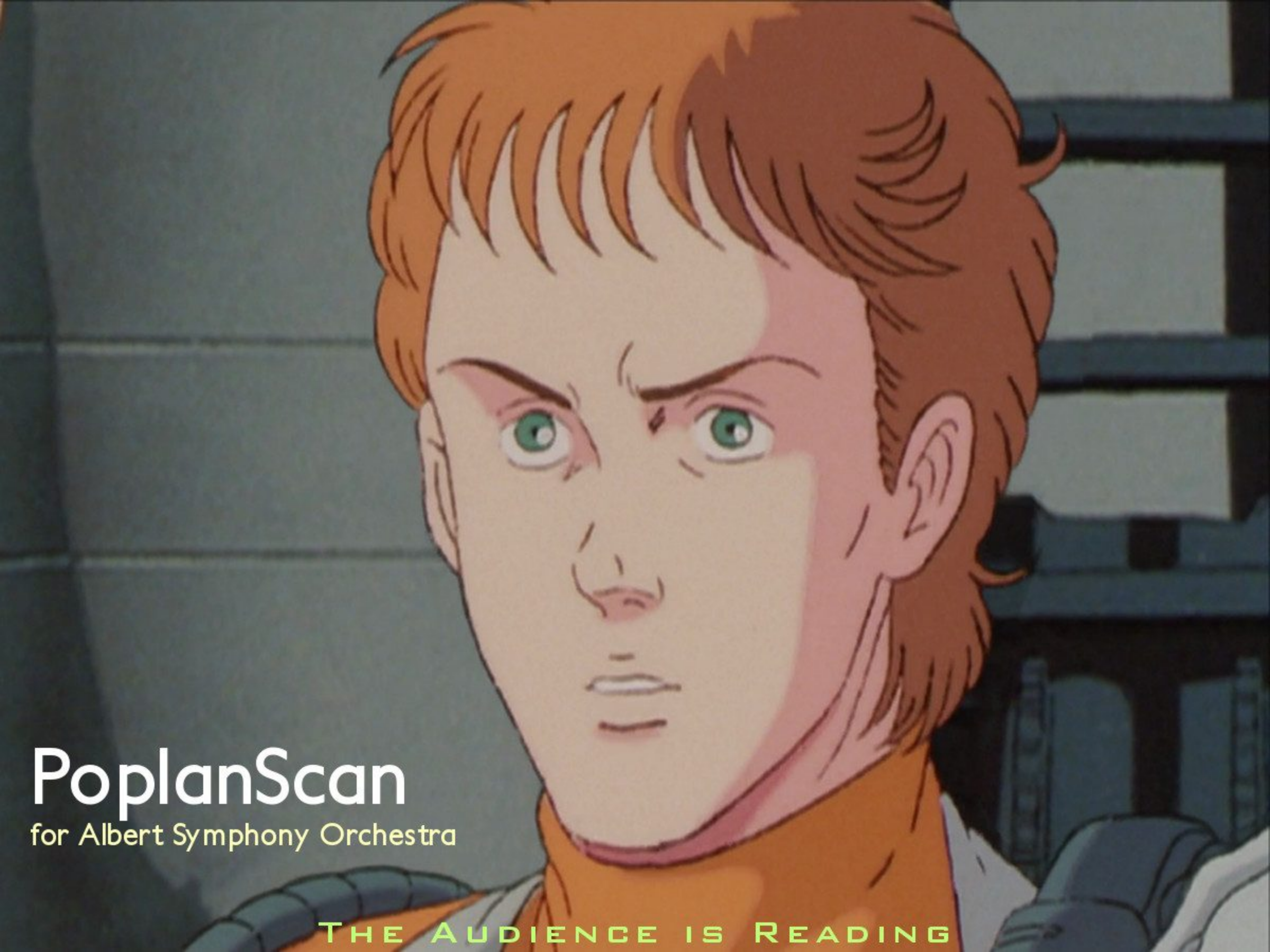
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BAD BUG [MIDNIGHT]



PoplanScan

for Albert Symphony Orchestra

THE AUDIENCE IS READING